

# AFRICA =HOT!

South African photographer Guy Tillim and Nicole Aeby, head of the photography department at the Swiss School of Journalism in Zurich, worked with the World Press Photo organisation to run workshops for African photographers which produced the Africa Hot! pictures and exhibition.

Eight photographers from the continent met in Addis Ababa to work on this project with Tillim and Aeby and then they returned to their countries to implement the ideas and to continue to receive tutoring via the Internet. George Manful, a UN Environment Programme expert on climate change gave the participants insight into the subject.

Tillim said the theme of climate change was deliberately chosen because of the need to think hard and carefully about how to translate something so elusive into images. "The concept is difficult to figure out and photograph: is a drought just a drought, or is it the effect of global warming?" Those were the kinds of assessments the photographers had to make as a result of choosing to document this particular issue.

And also, scientists are saying that the coming effects of climate change will affect Africa most severely, so it seemed opportune to focus on this particular issue. "We will experience it more acutely than others," Tillim said.

The project set out to look at "people on the margins" and to aim not to be didactic about the subject or to thrust the issue into people's faces. There were lots of discussions which involved looking, questioning and relooking. "A humanistic approach leads to greater imagination," Tillim said, "it affects the interaction with people and the representation of them."

The resulting photos, he feels, are deliberately not dealing with climate change directly or simplistically. "Conventional iconography is a dead-end," Tillim says.

After having done their own research, the eight students chose their own angles and got to work in their own countries. Geographically, they covered much of the African continent. They were:

- Akintunde Akinleye, Nigeria
- Emmanuel Daou, Mali
- Osama Dawod, Egypt
- Carlos Litulo, Mozambique
- Mohamed Mambo, Tanzania
- Felix Masi, Kenya
- Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi, Zimbabwe
- Michael Tsegaye, Ethiopia

Some of the photographers went for subjects like the consequences of oil production in the Niger delta and logging in Mozambique, while others looked beyond the problems for solutions. Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi, for example, focused on a farmer in Zimbabwe who catches rainwater to irrigate his and his neighbours' land in times of drought. Mohamed Mambo showed how mangrove trees are used to fight erosion.

The exhibition was displayed in the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam in June, alongside the World Press Photo exhibition and an overview of the work of the 2006 winning photographer Spencer Platt. It involved eight picture stories and was connected to the Dutch climate change awareness campaign "Hier" (Here). The campaign consists of projects in the Netherlands, Africa and South America.



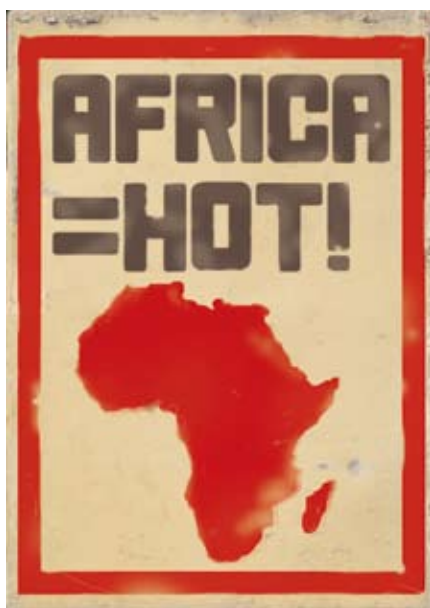


## *Emmanuel Daou, Mali*

Increased motorcycle traffic is polluting the air of Bamako and Mali's desert has been steadily advancing south in recent years. Desertification occurs when desert spreads and takes over fertile farmland. Some farmers have decided to leave the north of the country to search for work in the cities of the south. The large number of people resettling in these areas has led to additional environmental problems, such as increased pollution and overpopulation, and many have been unable to find work.







## *Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi, Zimbabwe*

As rain begins to fall, farmers in Kadoma put buckets in position to harvest it for later use. Corn is the most widely grown crop in Zimbabwe. Recent periods of high temperatures and low rainfall have had a dramatic negative effect on crop growth and yields.







## *Osama Dawod, Egypt*

Although he has considered moving away, Hani has decided to try to make a living in Rosetta. The northern coast of Egypt has seen rising sea levels in recent years. The effects of this have been closely felt in the town of Rosetta, where for generations residents have depended upon the sea for their livelihoods. The environmental changes have hurt the fishing and farming industries, forcing many unemployed villagers to consider emigrating to other countries in search of work.





## *Mohamed Mambo, Tanzania*

Tanzania's Kilwa coastal belt is fringed by mangrove forests, which have an important role in controlling the effects of ocean currents. The trees act as a buffer between land and water, helping to protect against storm surges and rising tides. The mangrove forests are being felled at an alarming rate, greatly reducing the protective effect they have on the region's coast. Saplings from a mangrove nursery project are now being planted in areas where mangroves were destroyed.







## *Michael Tsegaye, Ethiopia*

Ethiopia's Konso people practice a traditional form of terraced agriculture on their hilly terrain. In recent years drought conditions in the area and soil erosion have caused their farming system to break down. Some of the vulnerable farmers in Gemole village are adapting to these conditions by agreeing to resettle in new areas. Others have chosen to stay on their own land and cope with the changing circumstances.

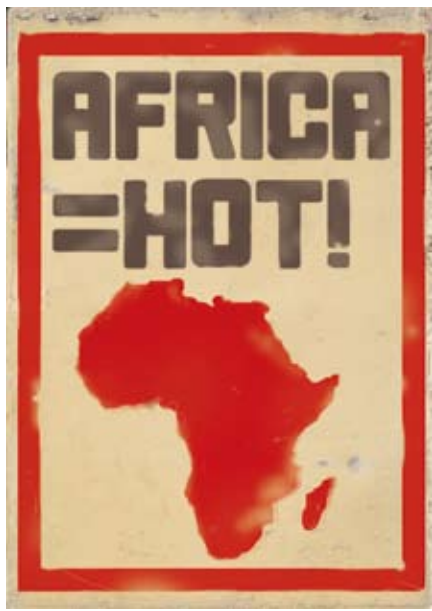


## *Akintunde Akinleye, Nigeria*

Children mend fishing nets in a muddy river near Iko village. Crude oil remains the lifeblood of major world economies and Nigeria is the eighth largest crude oil producer in the world. As a result of high oil prices, its earnings have soared in recent years. But the social, economic and environmental costs of oil exploration in Nigeria have been extensive.







## *Felix Masi, Kenya*

Many children in northern Kenya have stopped attending school in order to help search for water.

In 2006 Kenya experienced prolonged drought and famine, forcing the government to declare the crisis a national disaster. Worst affected was the northern region of the country, where lack of food and water threatened the health of residents and led to widespread livestock losses. The famine aggravated an already dire situation caused by poverty in the region.



## *Carlos Litulo, Mozambique*

In Mozambique, wood from deforestation is being used in the production of charcoal. Tropical deforestation is one of the most critical environmental problems facing developing countries today. It is believed to contribute to global climate change by increasing carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, let alone the long-term, potentially catastrophic impacts on biodiversity.

