



Cristina de Middel: This Is What Hatred Did



The photographer investigates photography's ambiguous relationship to truth.

In the 1960s, a five-year-old Nigerian child's village was attacked by soldiers. His mother had left him home alone and he had to run away, escaping the bombs and the fire. He saved his life entering the Bush, this magical territory where no humans are allowed and where all the Yoruba spirits live and fight. Our kid spent thirty years lost in the Bush trying to find his way back home amongst the spirits and the dead. He got married two times, became a king, a god, a slave, a cow, a jar, a horse, and a goat. He ate gold, silver and bronze, snakes and snails. He fought two wars and was sentenced to death half a dozen times... all that in just one hundred pages.

Amos Tutuola wrote *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* in 1964 and then had to leave the country to escape the violent reactions to a book that would open in exile a new path for contemporary African narratives. The story is told by the five-year-old child in a very basic, direct, naive and repetitive style that only children master, but it manages to convey the magical and absurd reality that war and religion added to the Nigerian experience.

The series *This is What Hatred Did* (the mysterious last sentence of the book) aims to provide an illustrated contemporary version of this story, adapting the characters, space and the ambient to the actual situation of the country. The Bush is now the Lagosian neighborhood of Makoko, a floating slum with its own rules, commanded by kings and community leaders. It is a place where no logic seems to prevail and that is equally forbidden for those who do not belong. With the conviction that

VISUAL ARTS
TORONTO

Thu, September 24–
Sat, November 07, 2015

Venue

80 Spadina Ave, Toronto, ON M5V
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Admission

Gallery hours: Tuesday–Friday, from
11 am to 5 pm; Saturday, from 12 pm
to 5 pm.

More information

[Venue's website](#)

Credits

Image: Cristina de Middel, Arufin,
from the series entitled *This Is What
Hatred Did*, 2014.



contemporary issues should be described in a way that includes the ancient traditions, perspectives, fears and hopes, this series documents the enhanced reality of one of the most iconic places in Nigeria, according to the always dramatic media.

ABOUT CRISTINA DE MIDDEL

Cristina de Middel is a photographer whose work investigates photography's ambiguous relationship to truth. Blending documentary and conceptual photographic practices, she plays with reconstructions and archetypes that blur the border between reality and fiction. After a successful career as a photojournalist, de Middel stepped outside of the photojournalistic gaze.

She then produced the critically acclaimed series, *The Afronauts*, in 2012, which explored the history of a failed space program in Zambia in the 1960s through staged reenactments of obscure narratives. De Middel's work shows that fiction can serve as the subject of photography just as well as facts can, highlighting that our expectation that photography must always make reference to reality is flawed.

De Middel has exhibited extensively internationally and has received numerous awards and nominations, including PhotoFolio Arles 2012, the Deutsche Börse Prize, POPCAP' 13, and the Infinity Award from the International Center of Photography in New York. De Middel lives and works in Mexico.