

Rediscovery or Repositioning? The Image of Ethiopia.

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From early colonial ethnography to contemporary charity advertising, Africa has been perceived as a suffering and distant 'other'. Imperial campaign traditions reduce the depiction of a continent to famine, corruption and sensationalised violence collectively framing viewers as 'us' and 'them'. However, with increasingly engaged visual artists on the continent are contributing to a global cultural exchange within artistic and increasingly within public spaces. The epistemic value of 'outsideness' as Mikhail Bakhtin suggests, could alter the state of exchange, making it mutually enriching.

This paper explores the image of Ethiopia. In 1984-5, the nation was thrust under the scrupulous eyes of the world as part of the Live Aid campaign. 25 years later, as the nation hosts the Addis Foto Fest 2010 and opens the Zoma Contemporary Arts Centre in 2011, what images are being projected from the only African nation able to resist the 'Scramble for Africa'?