

Galerie Rompone

Shiraz Damani @Salone Rompone

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Please tell us something about the creation of the photography series we are seeing?

The photos were taken between 1976 and 1978, when I was working as a freelance photographer for the German Society for African Culture e.V. all events, Receptions and events in Bonn, Cologne, Düsseldorf and Bochum

Tell us something about your career.

I was born in Uganda in 1947 and belong to an Indian minority there and worked for Ugandan television UTV. As the dictator Idi Amin in 1971 I shot it on 16mm film and came in April 1972 with a scholarship to Germany. In Cologne I studied at the technical school for photography. In August In 1972, Idi Amin issued a decree that all people of Asian descent They must leave Uganda within three months and hand in their passport. The I didn't do it, but I couldn't travel to Uganda anymore. After nine After Idi Amin was in power, my passport expired and I became a German citizen in 1980 Citizen. In Germany I worked as a freelance photographer and have For example, artist portraits were made and Michael's first exhibition in 1975 Buthe photographed in the Cologne Kunsthalle.

What was your mood at the diplomatic meetings between African and German politicians in the 1970s?

There was a good atmosphere between the African ambassadors, Presidents and Vice Presidents. I remember that the Somali government was invited to Bonn after the Mogadishu affair, where there was also a good one atmosphere prevailed. When the then Zambian President Kaunda was there, always a white handkerchief in his hand. He often had to cry during his speeches and dried his tears with the cloth. As a photographer I was very privileged to have that I could easily move between all of them.

Africa is close to your heart. Compared to back then, where is Africa now?

Africa now? This is a very difficult question. At that time there was a cold war, starting in 1954 Africa's independence movements. But the colonial powers always had still have great influence. Even then, as now, there were many coups, and there military governments came to power.

There is also a new generation of Presidents.

Yoweri Museveni has been in Uganda since the mid-1980s in power. The same president has been in power in Gabon for 56 years. Now putschists Ali Bongo Ondimba under house arrest. Gabon is a rich land, with wood and oil. Only 2 million people live there, mostly are very poor. Congo is also rich. There is a lot of uranium in Niger. 25% what we do Uranium needs comes from Niger. A gas pipeline runs from Nigeria Spain via Niger. And that's dangerous right now because there's a coup in Niger gives. Many young people are now getting involved in Africa Scientists for the revival of the Pan-African movement. She was in the Initiated by Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah in the 1950s and implemented in 1956 Putschists defeated. Nkrumah was a visionary man. Because today many Africans are self-critical and say: We cannot blame everything on the colonial powers. We've been here for 60 Independent for years and have done nothing right for our country receive. When I talk to young Africans in Germany today, many of them don't know anything about it their homeland and are amazed at how complex it is.

Are there any photos you particularly fondly remember?

When Senegalese President Leopold Sedar Senghor was at Cologne Bonn in 1977 When we arrived at Fkufhafen, there was a distant stand for photographers. i didn't want to have the same photo in the box as everyone else and I quickly get very close to them The machine was running and I was able to take a close-up photo of the president. So have I did that often.

Shiraz Damani, born in 1947 in Uganda, coming to Germany in the early 1970ties, Studied Photography in Cologne and Dortmund, works as a freelance photographer in Cologne.