

UCLA

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies

Title

(In)visible Cities

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9015b8mq>

Journal

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 39(2)

ISSN

0041-5715

Author

Bucci, Gianpaolo

Publication Date

2016

DOI

10.5070/F7392031108

Copyright Information

Copyright 2016 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Peer reviewed

Photographs

(In)visible Cities

Gianpaolo Bucci

Bringing together moments from Cardiff, Los Angeles, Houston, New York and Istanbul, my photographic journey, titled *(In)visible Cities*, examines the varied urban spaces inhabited by African migrants. My photos represent diverse circumstances and people, portraying wealthy professionals, artists, human rights activists, and academics, but also viewing the lives of the involuntarily displaced, such as refugee journalists fleeing prosecution and former sailors who became economically disenfranchised upon their return to land. Through this project, I intend to convey under-recognized stories of change and displacement.



Residents of Los Angeles may be familiar with the city's Little Ethiopia, a mid-Wilshire district known for its famous restaurants. Lesser known, however, is the city's Ethiopian Orthodox Church in nearby Culver City, shown here. Its presence testifies to the tendency for populations of African migrants to Los Angeles County to live relatively dispersed throughout the area, unlike

European cities where immigrants tend to dwell in culturally-affiliated neighborhoods. Community gatherings thus often take place on the weekends, during religious and sports events. On Sundays, the ritual mass in Culver City starts before dawn and lasts about four hours. Most celebrations are held in ancient Amharic.



Meet Mohammad Hobe, a student of Islamic calligraphy who moved from South Africa to Istanbul in order to perfect his abilities under the guidance of one of the world's most renowned masters of the art form, Hasan Çelebi. During his daily life in the Anatolian part of the city, he says, he has little time for rapid meals, as most of his day is dedicated to his artistic practice.



On the south side of Houston, several Liberian families live in the same apartment complex. Here, one of these families, the Taylus, is shown. They were brought to the United States through the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program. While an American flag, crucifix, and photograph of President Barack Obama adorn their kitchen counter, the family maintains strong ties to their Liberian origins through the community of their residential building.

Gianpaolo Bucci is a video artist, director, and photographer based in Italy, whose practice takes him around the world. Further information on his (In)visible Cities project can be found at www.invisiblecities.us.

