



'Eleventh' by Lina Iris Viktor, as seen in *Africa State of Mind*

# Paradox and promise

Author Ekow Eshun celebrates the influence of Africa

## AFRICA STATE OF MIND

Contemporary Photography  
Reimagines a Continent  
Ekow Eshun (Ed)  
THAMES & HUDSON (£39.95)

‘It would be inaccurate to describe the photographers here as part of any sort of movement,’ writes Ekow Eshun in the introduction to *Africa State of Mind*. ‘But perhaps we might say they are indicative of a moment.’

*Africa State of Mind* expands on a 2018 exhibition that Eshun curated, first shown at New Art Exchange, Nottingham. A fascinating introductory essay charts the development of photography by African-born practitioners, from pioneering Victorian-era photographers Gerrard Lutterodt and Francis W Joaque, through the



studio photography of Samuel Fosso and Seydou Keita, and photojournalistic representations of anti-apartheid struggles by the Afrapix collective.

The book is then divided into four sections. “Hybrid Cities” focuses on the rapid transformations of Africa’s metropolitan spaces. “Zones of Freedom” presents photographers whose work explores gender, sexuality and identity, including Zanele Muholi HonFRPS. “Myth and Memory” reflects on history, colonial legacies and Western stereotypes. “Inner Landscapes” features subjective takes on Africa.

As Eshun says, there is an array of approaches among the photographers grouped here, but they all share ‘an insistence that Africa be seen in all its paradox and promise and everyday wonder’.



## BIG HEART, STRONG HANDS

Anne Helene Gjelstad  
DEWI LEWIS (£35)

On the remote Estonian islands of Kihnu and Manija lives a tight-knit community thought to be the last matriarchal society in Europe. With their husbands away at sea, older women manage almost everything here. Norwegian photographer Anne Helene Gjelstad has captured their homes, their daily lives, their traditional customs, and the force of their individual personalities.



## DAY SLEEPER

Dorothea Lange  
and Sam Contis  
MACK (£27)

Dorothea Lange’s photographs of the Great Depression are instantly recognisable. But Sam Contis’s artist’s book, published alongside a major exhibition at MoMA, invites us to look anew at the documentary photographer’s vision. Themed around the figure of the day sleeper, the book features lesser-known images from Lange’s archive, arranged in thought-provoking new ways.



## TO HANS

Vivian Keulards  
SCHILT PUBLISHING (£35)

Vivian Keulards’ brother Hans was 38 when he died of a drug-related cardiac arrest. For years her family avoided talking about Hans, or the addiction that killed him. This moving, profoundly personal book chronicles Vivian’s search for answers, revisiting family photos, travelling to Berlin and speaking with experts. At the heart of the book lies a question: could he have been saved?