



PEABODY MUSEUM
of ARCHAEOLOGY & ETHNOLOGY

PRESS RELEASE

*AVENUE PATRICE LUMUMBA: PHOTOGRAPHS
BY GUY TILLIM*



Grande Hotel Beira, Mozambique, 2008. Photo by Guy Tillim.

What: New Exhibition

Opening: April 29, 2009–September 8, 2009

Opening Reception: Wed., April 29, 2009

5:00 P.M. Exhibition Opening &
Reception

5:45 P.M. Gallery talk & Book Signing
Free and Open to the Public

Where: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and
Ethnology, Harvard University

11 Divinity Ave. Cambridge, MA

Information: 617-496-1027

“In many African cities, there are streets, avenues, and squares named after Patrice Lumumba, one of the first elected African leaders of modern times, winning the Congo election after independence from Belgium in 1960...Today [long after his assassination], his image as a nationalist visionary necessarily remains unmolested by the accusations of abuse of power that became synonymous with later African heads of state.”

– Guy Tillim, 2007 Robert Gardner Photography Fellow, Peabody Museum

(Cambridge, March 26, 2009) The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology presents a new exhibition and publication, *Avenue Patrice Lumumba: Photographs by Guy Tillim*.

As the first recipient of the Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography at the Peabody Museum, Guy Tillim



Maputo, Mozambique, 2007. Photo by Guy Tillim.

traveled through Angola, Mozambique, Congo, and Madagascar, documenting the grand colonial architecture and how it has become part of a contemporary African stage.

Guy Tillim's large photographs reveal the decay and detritus of colonialism in Western and Southern Africa on a scale both monumental and slight. He exposes the stains, cracks, and filth of huge, crumbling institutional structures: post offices, schools, offices, hotels, banks. He winds around their staircases and looks through their windows, finding offices and classrooms devoid of basic equipment and furniture. While the people in these images are almost peripheral—at the frames' edges, with turned backs, or slightly out of focus—there is an acute sense of humanity in the images, shown through the personal objects left behind: an umbrella, a house plant, a purse, a book.

Indeed, as Tillim told an interviewer in 2008, "The buildings are very much inhabited, but many are decaying, so the challenge was not to become a connoisseur of decay, or come up with some sort of Havana-esque vision. I'd thought about this project for quite a number of years, wondered how I'd ever get around to it. Then the Fellowship came."

([a. magazine](#), July 2008.)

The exhibition opens Wednesday, April 29, 2009 and will remain on view through September 8, 2009.

There will be a book signing of *Avenue Patrice Lumumba: Photographs by Guy Tillim* at the opening.

About the Book

Avenue Patrice Lumumba: Photographs by Guy Tillim was published in January 2009 by the Peabody Museum Press and Prestel. The book will be available for purchase at the Museum and may be ordered by sending an email to peapub@fas.harvard.edu or by calling 617-495-3939. Hardcover, 128 pages with 60 color photographs, \$65.

Guy Tillim

Guy Tillim is an award-winning documentary still photographer from South Africa. Tillim began his professional career in 1986 and worked as a freelance photojournalist for the local and foreign media, including Reuters and Agence France-Presse. He has exhibited in more than a dozen countries and published in numerous volumes and journals; his work has focused on documenting social conflict and inequality in the countries of Africa. From teenage soldiers in Rwanda to civil war in Congo to the dislocation of entire populations in Angola, Tillim returns to lands whose violence he once covered as a journalist to recover the shadows that violence produced in the people and lands.

In the words of arts curator Michket Krifa, "Guy Tillim ... combines a profound sense of historic documentation of African countries ravaged by conflicts and tragedies of all kinds and a very stringent formal aesthetic devoid of all mannerism."

Tillim has received many awards for his work including the Prix SCAM (Société civile des auteurs multimédia) Roger Pic in 2002, the Higashikawa Overseas Photographer Award (Japan) in 2003, the 2004 DaimlerChrysler Arts Award for South African photography, and the 2005 Leica Oskar Barnack Award.

About the Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography

The Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography funds an “established practitioner of the photographic arts to create and subsequently publish through the Peabody Museum a major book of photographs on the human condition anywhere in the world.” The Fellowship committee invites nominations from experts around the world; nominees are reviewed and selected by a committee of three. The Fellowship provides a stipend of \$50,000. The Fellowship is unique in its dedication to funding professional documentary photography. The Fellowship was given by Robert Gardner, award-winning documentary filmmaker and author, whose works have entered the permanent canon of non-fiction filmmaking. Gardner’s works include the documentary films “Dead Birds” and “Forest of Bliss” and books *The Impulse to Preserve: Reflections of a Filmmaker* and *Making Dead Birds: Chronicle of a Film*. In the 1970s Gardner produced and hosted “Screening Room,” a series of more than one hundred 90-minute programs on independent and experimental filmmaking. The series, considered an invaluable historical record of modern cinema, has been transferred to digital format for archival preservation by the Museum of Film and Broadcasting in New York City. Robert Gardner received Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Harvard University and was director of the Film Study Center from 1957 to 1997. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

About the Peabody Museum

The Peabody Museum is among the oldest archaeological and ethnographic museums in the world with one of the finest collections of human cultural history found anywhere. It is home to superb materials from Africa, ancient Europe, North America, Mesoamerica, Oceania, and South America in particular. In addition to its archaeological and ethnographic holdings, the Museum's photographic archives, one of the largest of its kind, hold more than 500,000 historical photographs, dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the present and chronicling anthropology, archaeology, and world culture.

Location: *The Peabody Museum is located at 11 Divinity Avenue in Cambridge. The Museum is a short walk from the Harvard Square MBTA station.*

Hours: 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., seven days a week. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Admission is \$9 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors, \$6 for children, 3–18. Free with Harvard ID or Museum membership. The Museum is free to Massachusetts residents Sundays, 9 A.M. to noon, year round, and Wednesdays from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. (September to May). Admission includes admission to the Harvard Museum of Natural History. For more information call 617-496-1027 or go online to: www.peabody.harvard.edu.

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