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Event (<https://www.contemporaryand.com/exhibition/>) / Michael Tsegaye: WORKING GIRLS

EXHIBITION

**Michael Tsegaye: WORKING GIRLS**

Addis Fine Arts Project Space at TAFETA, London, United Kingdom  
22 Jun 2018 - 14 Jul 2018



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Michael Tsegaye, Working Girls II, IX, 2009, digital archival print, 60x90 cm

**Addis Fine Art presents Michael Tsegaye's powerful photographic series, 'Working Girls', which documents the lives of a group of female sex workers in Addis Ababa, at the AFA project space in London.**

Ethiopia has recently seen unprecedented economic growth, with its capital being home to some of the fastest rates of urbanisation and development in the world; yet amongst its impressive achievements lies a darker reality: a conspicuous and burgeoning illicit sex trade. It is within this context that Tsegaye's remarkable take on documenting the lives of sex workers became a reality.

For two weeks, Tsegaye coexisted with a group of women in their claustrophobic, dingy communal homes. Finding them in a state of stillness and vulnerability, in a deeply intimate environment, he spent full days with them. Arriving in the morning and leaving after dark when they started work, he won their trust and approval, before taking the sensitive and striking images. The resultant black and white photographs, speak of this trust that developed between the spectator and observed subject, as the photographer's presence is reticent. When the women in the candle-lit rooms look directly at the lens, they ostensibly look at observer and not at the camera. The intractability of his subject-matter is reflected by the low angle shots of the series, many of which hesitate to move above waist level, refusing to tower over these women in an overbearing manner as a client might outside these walls. This, however, only offers a snapshot of the wider setting, and when the backdrop is observable it is dominated by the opaque darkness, which makes up the majority of the space. This alludes heavily to the oppressive and dangerous circumstances in which they find themselves. In spite of this, the darkness is juxtaposed with a constant reminder of the importance of a family atmosphere in the face of adversity.

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Tsegaye's purpose is simply to be the vehicle transporting the story to the observer.

Michael Tsegaye (b.1975), is arguably the most important Ethiopian photographer of his generation, has lived and worked in the capital Addis Ababa his entire life. Tsegaye originally trained as a painter and received his diploma from Addis Ababa University's School of Fine Art in 2002. As a fine art photographer, Tsegaye's work has an attentive voice in recording and documenting the change and shifting typography of his country. His style is a product of his own personal aesthetic and his long-term historic approach to his work.

Opening Reception:

Thursday 21st of June 2018, 6-9pm

RSVP to [hello@addisfineart.com](mailto:hello@addisfineart.com) (mailto:hello@addisfineart.com?subject=Michael%20Tsegaye%20%7C%20Working%20Girls%20)

Addis Fine Art Project Space  
Tafeta 47-50 Margaret Street,  
London W1W 8SB

[addisfineart.com \(https://addisfineart.com/exhibitions/48/overview/\)](https://addisfineart.com/exhibitions/48/overview/)



**Queering The Gaze**  
**Mikael Owunna**

27 June – 27 July  
We – Sa, 4 p.m – 7 p.m.  
alpha nova & galerie futura

HEINRICH BOLL STIFTUNG  
galerie futura

(<http://calendar.boell.de/de/event/queering-gaze>)



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