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Tree Of Forgetfulness



Synopsis

The trans-Atlantic trade in slaves lasted for three centuries. Millions of Africans were forced to leave their places of birth and march to the coast to await their deportation to the European plantations on the other side of the Atlantic. The histories of West Africa and Suriname are thus inextricably entwined with the Dutch colonial past. Laura Samsom Rous and Hans Samsom photographed the final section of the slave route in Africa lasting hundreds of kilometres that ended at the port of Ouidah in Benin on the Slave Coast of West Africa. They also took photographs of the king of Benin, whose forefathers had cooperated with the European slave traders. They followed the trail to Suriname, photographing the inland, the village Tutubuka, and the Maroons, the direct descendants of the slaves that managed to escape the plantations and fight for their freedom. Laura Samsom Rous took the portrait photographs, and Hans Samsom used a panoramic camera with a rotating lens to photograph the landscape. Text in English, Dutch, French and Sranan.

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Customer Reviews

"This book is difficult to describe. On one level, it is gorgeous photography – for example, there is a photo of a couple dining in the shade of the palm grove on [a] sun-drenched beach at the bungalow hotel Auberge de la Diaspora. Out of context one could think 'Oh, what a lovely setting.' In context, this grove is near the monument for 'The Port of No Return,' a monument at the coast is Ouidah symbolising the largest deportation known to man. This is an unusual approach, and the authors obviously have a deep respect for the people and the land. They include information about the slave trade in general, and its persistence to this day, with links to resources." (African American

History & Heritage)"Dutch photographer Laura Samsom Rous and Hans Samsom have collaborated to produce an unusual book. Following the last part of the route of the transatlantic slave trade, stretching from Senegal to Angola, they have photographed the present-day people and landscapes of Ouidah, Benin. Ouidah was a major port from which African captives were deported. The brief text (in English, French, Dutch, and Sranan) tells the story of the trade in humans that continued for 300 years. Other photographs are portraits of the descendants of Africans now living in Surinam (a former Dutch possession) and the Netherlands, as well as panoramas of these countries. From Africa to Surinam the migration was forced, but the one to the Netherlands occurred after Surinam's independence in 1975. Surinam's population is 450,000, and Surinamese in the Netherlands number 315,000. The brilliant photographs of Benin, Surinam and Amsterdam are beautiful and evocative of the slave trade, often assisted by the kings of Dahomey (now Benin). The direct looks of the subjects in the portraits resonate with their history of disruption and migration. For further information there are Internet addresses and a brief note about slavery in the world today. For collections of photography, history, and Africana." (Multicultural Review)

Laura Samsom Rous studied anthropology at the University of Amsterdam and was a lecturer at the Academy of Art in Utrecht and The Hague. Her photographs are in international collections. Together with Hans Samsom, she worked for the United Nations, the Anti Apartheid Movement and the Royal Tropical Institute in the Netherlands. They work and live in Amsterdam. Hans Samsom studied at the Academy for Photography in The Hague and worked as a commercial photographer at the Groebli studios in Zürich. Together with Laura Samsom Rous he worked for the United Nations, the Anti Apartheid Movement and the Royal Tropical Institute in the Netherlands. They work and live in Amsterdam.

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