Ye Deji Abeba Negn: Sonic Floral Imaginaries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

By

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Harvard University Graduate School of Design

Certified by

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Mohsen Mostafavi
Alexander and Victoria Wiley Professor of Design and Harvard University Distinguished Service Professor
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
I AM A FLOWER AT YOUR YARD

Te Deji

SONIC FLORAL IMAGINARIES IN ADDIS ABABA ETHIOPIA

Abeba Negn

OLANI EWUNNET
YE DEJI ABEBA NEGN
I AM A FLOWER AT YOUR YARD

Sonic Floral Imaginaries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Olani Ewunnet

Advised by Mohsen Mostafavi
Companion Sonic Works

_Ye Deji Abeba Negn: Sonic Floral Imaginaries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia_, illustrates and creates new sonics in Ethiopian floral imagination. The sound works produced to accompany the written thesis were arranged and produced by the author. The sound works would not have been possible without collaboration with brilliant musicians with whom the research could be sonified and thus shared with a broader audience. For this collaboration, my sincere gratitude is extended to each being listed in the credits on the following spread.

The sound works can be found online below. One might listen while reading this research.

https://soundcloud.com/olani-ewunnet/sets/abeba
Tracklist Credits

Neber Alo Enoralo: Terra Eternal
Arranged and Produced by: Olani Ewunnet
Saxophone by: D.A. Mekonnen
Flute: Jessica Shand

Addis Adey Abeba
Arranged and Produced by: Olani Ewunnet
Synth: Lucas Pao
Vocal Sample: Dr. Alemayehu Wassie Eshete
Flute: Jessica Shand

Rose
Arranged and Produced by: Olani Ewunnet
Synths: D.A. Mekonnen and Olani Ewunnet
Vocals: Miehrit Kassa
Flute: Jessica Shand

A Spell Against Ethnic Hatred
Title from Bedilu Wakjira’s 1989 poem by same name.

Blanch the leaves of love and peace in a rocky pot,
let the devil’s hideous flowers wilt and rot.

Let your grief murmur with a slow oozing pain,
let the sun not be beyond rising, let healing not be disdained.

- Bedilu Wakjira (1989)

Abebaye (Reprise Eternal)
Arranged and Produced by: Olani Ewunnet
Flute: Jessica Shand
Vocals: M. Gebre Sellassie and Jessica Shand
Piano: Wairimu Nduba
Introduction:
Ye Deji Abeba Negn

Ye Deji Abeba Negn: Sonic Floral Imaginaries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, illustrates and creates new sonics in Ethiopian floral imagination. Composed as a series of essays, graphic scores, and sound works, the thesis examines Ethiopia’s embodied relationships with flowers, synthesizing and transmuting existing floral discourse to create a new mode of floral discourse and creative practice in Addis Ababa’s shifting urban terrain.

Situated at the intersection of indigenous Ethiopian epistemologies, soundscape, and landscape theory, Ye Deji Abeba Negn argues that if one wants to understand flowers in Ethiopia, one should listen. One might then ask, listen to what? The sonic world of flowers is tied to a series of constituent parts: Ethiopian time theory, music culture, urban development, industrialization, and gender relations.

The thesis first illustrates two flower protagonists, Adey Abeba, the wild yellow daisies of Ethiopian New Year that grow in fal-
low land across the country, and the Rose, the most profitable flower of Ethiopia’s booming cut-flower industry.

Next, examining the capital Addis Ababa’s formation and namesake, the ‘New Flower’, Ye Deji Abeba Negn, illustrates the city’s sprawling network of rose greenhouses rapidly replacing fallow and cultivated land of local farmers while bringing in foreign currency and employing hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians.

From the flowers and Addis Ababa, we conclude with a series of graphic scores that synthesize and transform existing modes of floral discourse in Ethiopia with a new mode of speculative flower pedagogy. Unfurled textually and graphically, these realms are then sonified using the Ethiopian New Year’s pentatonic music scale of the flowers.

Through the documentation and excavation of sonic floral cultural artifacts, the thesis recomposes the constituent parts of Ethiopia’s embodied relationship with flowers, revealing the capacity of flowers as drivers of spatial and cultural production.

The essays gathered here tell this story of Ethiopia’s embodied relationships with flowers. The central aspiration of this writing and its accompanying sonic works is to reflect back to Ethiopians the way we imagine our relationship with landscape, as embodied in our floral imaginaries.

Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan explains that “space and place are basic components of the lived world; we take them for granted. When we think about them, however, they may assume unexpected meanings and raise questions we have not thought to ask.” The sonic works imagine flowers through their rich history in Ethiopian time theory, aurality, gender relations and urbanism. Addis Ababa is tied to a complex entanglement of socio-economic, political and cultural interrelationships with the rest of the world.

If we listen to these relationships, flowers repeatedly emerge: in Addis Ababa’s namesake as a flower, in the cut-flower industry’s employment of Ethiopian women, in the Ethiopian calendar system which marks New Years by the blooming of adey abeba across the country’s fallow lands. Indeed, flowers form an essential pillar of the Ethiopian understanding of space and place.

A Brief Introduction to Flowers

1 Yi-fu Tuan, Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 3.
Life on planet Earth has proliferated for four billion years. Of interest here, is the most diverse and complex form of vegetation: flowering plants. The ancestors of flowers emerged from the depths of the ocean one billion years ago. Flower fossils date back to 120 million years ago and scientists have recently constructed a family tree of flowering plants, utilizing genetic data from nearly 800 species, identifying what the last common ancestor of flowering plants would have looked like. [2]

Radiating across the planet, flowering plants include over 250,000 species in a remarkable array of colors, scents and forms, dominating every landscape except coniferous forests and lichen-based tundra. [3]

Why do flowers matter?

Flowering plants are essential to human life on earth, and the relationship between humans and flowering plants needs renewed attention. Food in most human societies begins with a flower. [4] Vegetables, fruit, grains, cereals, are all flowering plants. Ancient frescoes discovered in Egypt and the Greek island Crete suggest that humans have

To trace back the evolution of flowers, the new study used the evolutionary tree (here simplified) that connects all living species of flowering plants. Photograph: Hervé Sauquet & Jürg Schönberger.


farmed flowers for their fragrance for more than five thousand years.\(^1\)

As flowering plants largely feed humans and the animals we raise for sustenance, they are a part of the core issues facing the planet this century: land erosion, desertification, global warming, food insecurity, drought are all worsening due to humanity’s relationship with flowering plants. In turn, global warming is altering the cycles of the flowering process. In a context with a highly sonic relationship to landscape, as is the case in Ethiopia, the production of sonic research provides one path.

Amongst the flowering plants humans cultivate, this thesis pays special attention to two: the Rose, cultivated by Ethiopians for export; and another, Adey Abeba, a wild flower that signals New Years.

**How do flowers function?**

Most flowers are one half of a partnership. They depend on a species extraordinarily different from themselves, someone who will carry their male sperm to another flower and bring compatible sperm to the

---

egg in their ovary.

While human beings have found a multitude of uses for flowering plants, scientists believe we are not their intended audience. Sharman Apt Russell for instance writes, "We sit in the theater, applauding and adoring, yet we don't understand most of the performance. We miss some of the best tricks. Flowers have patterns we cannot see, and they reflect colors we cannot imagine."[6] Bees for instance perceive flowers that reflect yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet, and ultraviolet light. Petals of flowers with colored lines or dark marks guide bees toward nectaries. Rows of dots, stripes, crosses, and checks on flowers attract bees.

Some flowers depend on the wind for flight to reproduction. Both rooted in soil and on the move, flowers adjust towards the sun, certain cells see color, responding to touch, tasting soil for nutrients, and listening. Sunflowers for example increase their growth when they hear sounds similar but louder than the human speaking voice. Bats use sonar signals to locate tropical vines and the vine in turn uses its concave petal to reflect the bat’s sonar signal.[7]


Flower Pollination by Insects

Butterfly

Bee

Moth

Diversity of Ethiopian Flora & Fauna

"The more we learn about flowers, the less silent they are."

- Sharman Apt Russell

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>No. of Species</th>
<th>Endemisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>6000</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammals</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reptiles</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphibians</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh water fish</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>37-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insects</td>
<td>Poory Known</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adey Abeba

**genus:** Bidens  
**tribe:** Coreopsidae  
**subfamily:** Asteroideae  
**family:** Asteraceae  
**kingdom:** Plantae

Ghelghele Meskel (Geez),  
Tsselim-Teneg (Tigrignia)  
Qello (Oromiffa)

Enkutatash
Yonas, Elsa, Betty

Enkutatash flower, Enkutatash flower
Enkutatash flower, Enkutatash flower
Welcome back, Enkutatash,
Beautiful and bold

The fields and mountains adorned by Adey Abeba
The month of Meskerem is here, Enkutatash
Accompanied by song, by Abebayehosh
Everyone longs for your arrival,

Your games and dance, your Abebayehosh
The fields and mountains adorned by Adey Abeba
The month of Meskerem is here, Enkutatash
Accompanied by song, by Abebayehosh
Everyone longs for your arrival,
Your games and dance, your Abebayehosh

Abebayehosh, lem lem
My relatives
Go on one by one
Until I break wood and build a house
I don't have a fence, let alone a house
I'll sleep outside counting the stars
When I go inside afterwards
My step mother will scold me
Call my mom, my medicine
If she tightens her belt

Adey, like silver, be clear like the spring
Adey, like silver, be clear like the spring
Above Left: Adey Abeba, alternatively called Maskal or Meskel Daisy depicted on Ethiopian stamp from the 1965. Above Right: Close up of Adey Abeba. Below: The genus Bidens is found across the world, here illustrating another vector of connection of Ethiopian flowers in the world. Opposite: Distribution of genus Bidens in Africa.

Global Genus Bidens Distribution

Green - Native
Purple - Introduced
This essay provides a brief introduction to the genus Bidens and the role Adey Abeba, members of this genus, play in socio-spatial imaginaries in Ethiopia, specifically the Meskel festival of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the secular Enkutatash, Ethiopian New Year.

The highest concentration of the genus is in the Afromontane Region, which provides a center of endemism for Bidens and many other plant groups.

Here, lies Ethiopia. 19 of the genus are found here in the Ethiopian highlands. The series of plants in the Bidens family called Adey Abeba include both annual and perennial varieties, from 10 cm to 150 cm tall. Adey Abeba of the genus Bidens is a wild flower, described as a, "weeds of pasture and fallow fields, while others are found on rocky slopes above 1500 m. all over the Plateau. The flowers are generally yellow, sometimes white, in masses in the second half of September, during which the Feast of the Finding of the True Cross (Meskel) occurs".

Adey Abeba is a member of the Compositae, or Daisy family, which form the largest family of flowering plants. Approximately 900 genera over 13,000 species

[10] Ibid.

Illustration of Meskel Festival, 1911. Depicted in Georges Rémond, La Fête Abyssine de l’Atié-Maskal: La Danse Des Prêtres, 1911.
Meskel celebrated in Addis Ababa’s largest public space, Meskel Square. Photo courtesy of Eden Sahle, The Ethiopian Herald.

"Elleni the brave
Has found the cross
Meskel flower, beautiful flower
Adey abeba, precious flower"

Excerpt from 'Meskel Abeba' a song performed during Meskel. Full lyrics in Appendix.

The Compositae family includes more than 10% of all flowering plants on the planet. Across all in the family, each flower has five stamens that join by pollen sacs. A flower with siblings across the oceans, scattered amongst billions of humans and living creatures. This is what we call the Mother flower, Adey Abeba. Adey from the Tigrinya word for mother and Abeba from the Geez and later Amharic word for flower. The mother flower, as conceptualized in Ethiopian cosmologies, is the flower which marks the beginning of a new year, and is utilized in sacred festivals across the country.

The first major study of Adey Abeba was undertaken by a young Ethiopian scientist named Mesfin Tadesse in 1984 for his thesis project. An excerpt from the thesis which summarizes the flower in Ethiopia.

“The genus Bidens forms a conspicuous component of the herbal flora of highland Ethiopia. Much of the plateau, many river valleys, hills and mountain slopes are covered, especially from September to November, by the yellow flowered species of this genus. In certain places they form quite a dense cover, making them

resemble cultivated fields. The coincidental flower of many of the species at about the end of the summer rains in September, i.e., the beginning of the new year in Ethiopia, during which also followers of the Christian religion celebrate the finding of the “Holy Cross,” have made some of them important in the festal activities on the Ethiopians displayed as a symbol of this period, bouquets of the species are often presented to families or friends as gifts. Moreover, in Keffa and Arssi Regions in Ethiopia, the leaves and flowers of this species are used medicinally. They are reported (personal communication with herbalists, 1980) to aid in blood clotting. It has also been suggested that the species possesses insecticidal properties.¹²

- Mesfin Tadesse (1984)

Tadesse has gone on to document genus Bidens across Ethiopia, providing important botanical documentation of the genus in Ethiopia and the United States. The flower's social, economic, and folk medicinal functions of the flower are understudied, and this thesis attempts to provide cursory documentation of the flower's place in Ethiopian conceptions of space and place.


Demera bonfire on Ethiopian New Year in the capital's largest public space, Meskel Square.
One of the most important festivals of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, is there is the festival of Meskel, the Finding of the True Cross celebrated on September 26-27, a few weeks after Ethiopian New Year on September 11-12 (leap year variable).

Meskel commemorates the Roman Queen Helena’s finding of the True Cross in 327 AD. It is believed that Queen Helena was supported by 'spiritual guidance' through the burning of a large bonfire. She followed the smoke and ash of the fire to the site of the True Cross upon which Jesus was crucified.

In Ethiopia, the festival,
through its manner of observance, is argued to contain relics from an “earlier pagan end of winter rite.”

Of the Meskel festivities, include the use of Adey Abeba, here called Ye Meskel Abeba. The flower is used throughout Meskel. The festival begins on September 26 with the construction of a conical wooden structure, called Demera in Amharic. The bonfire is a composed of long branches and is decorated with a cross and Ye Meskel Abeba at its top. Once the Demera is constructed, a ceremonial procession of members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church takes place. The bonfire is said to mirror Empress Helena’s burning of a bonfire and following its ashes to the site of the True Cross.

The Demera is then blessed by a Patriarch and lit with a torch. Once lit, attendees sing and dance around the fire, celebrating the finding of the Cross. One song, from Saint Yared, is transcribed below for reference. Saint Yared is detailed in section 'To Sonify a Flower'.


**RAINY SEASON FLOWER**

*A flower flourishes in heavy August rain
and everyone begins to fall in love with her;
sweet-smelling, cheery red,
lips flecked with dew.
Raindrops dancing on her shiny petals.
She is nature’s flower, nature flowering
before Nebase ends and Meskerem begins,
here in a clump of shrubs, accompanied by leaves.*

- Ayalneh Mulatu

Enkutatash paintings by Yoseph Abate
The Cross is illuminated, and it decorated the sky with stars and above everything else showed the Sun. 

Once the Demera fire consumes the pyre, the remaining ash and charcoal are put on foreheads of attendees in the shape of a cross. The ash of Adey Abeba and the pyre is sacred in its symbolism of the ash that illuminated the location of the True Cross.

In Addis Ababa, the ceremony takes place in the city's largest public space, Meskel Square. Named after the festival, with a standing capacity of 300,000. The two days of ceremony create a huge amount of micro-economic activity. Indeed for both New Years and Meskel, Adey Abeba flowers are brought into the city. Attendees around the Demera fire buy and sell candles and Ye Meskel Abeba, as well as wood for local Demera fires. Produce and animals are bought and sold for celebratory feasts.

In the next section, Rose, we will dive into the genus Rosa, another flower that plays an important role in Ethiopian life. The Rose, stands in stark contrast to Adey Abeba. Adey Abeba is sacred, and fleeting. Used to mark time and the sacred, Adey Abeba derives its importance in its dormancy for most of the year. The Rose is worth billions. Grown at industrial tempos, creating an industry that grows exponentially, the Rose in turn creates sprawling greenhouses across the Ethiopian capital. Both flowers are at the heart of Ethiopian sonic floral imaginaries, which will be illustrated in later sections.
Left Top: Demera painting by Afewerk Tekle
Left Bottom: Procession of members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church during Meskel in Addis Ababa.

Right Top: Close up of Church musicians singing compositions from Saint Yared. Right Center: Adey Abeba flowers atop a Demera. Bottom Right: Demera lit in Addis Ababa’s Meskel Square. Photos courtesy of Worqamba Ethiopia Tour & Travel.
Rose

- **genus:** Rosa
- **tribe:** Roseae
- **subfamily:** Rosoideae
- **family:** Rosaceae
- **kingdom:** Plantae

Left: Photo courtesy of Harvard Art Museum

Above: Diagram Rose anatomy, courtesy of Jackson & Perkins.
The Genus Rosa has approximately 100 wild species. Of these, the sole indigenous African rose is found in Ethiopia, the Rosa Abyssinica.

Roses have been the source of inspiration for humans since Greco Roman era. Poets from this time describe them as sacred to the goddess of love, describing affectionate flowers that, “kiss one another, their owners and even their insect visitors”. Cultures which recognize numerous gods and spirits often assign annual flower blooms to a “minor deity, often female”. [1]

For millions in the West, cut flowers are a staple at the supermarket, at cafes, at home. The New Flower tells the story of how these flowers entered the world. Where do they come from? And who grows them? When we look under the table, we quickly find that cut flowers are a vector of connection.

This essay charts the botanical journey of the rose (genus Rosa) in Ethiopia and its impact on the urban form of Addis Ababa. From here, we will pivot to the sonic modes through which Ethiopians embody their relationships with flowers.

LONGING FOR SPRING

Our, country, our times: you overwhelm us!
But still hope grows in us
like a rose, a bud of the good in us,
even if it does not flower
or wither…
a leaf is enough, if the roots go deep!
hope is enough, if the bud breathes deep!

- Bedilu Wakjira (1989)

Sudden Flowers, a collective of youth in Addis Ababa created a self-portrait series. Flowers are a reoccurring image in their work. Images courtesy of Eric Gottesman
**Abeba Abeba**

by Betsat Seyoum and Abbebe Fekade

*Hey my love, hey my friend*

*Addis Ababa,*

*The city of Gondar*

*How will the day come?*

*With the wind rustling,*

*Creeking the floors*

*I was waiting for you,*

*Thinking you’d come.*

*I don't trust the roads*

*Only other people walking up and down*

*Ahh my love, my love*

*My country my country, don't they say my country*

*Feel it deep when they talk bad about my country*

*There is no simple person*

*Left his country and was found by the river*

*There is no simple person*

Excerpt from 'Abeba Abeba', performed by two urban troubadours, *azmari* in Amharic, in Addis Ababa. Full lyrics in Appendix.
The New Flower:
Capital, Cut-Flower Industry, Landscape in Transformation

Today, cut flowers are a part of the suite of nontraditional agricultural commodities promoted by development agencies as “means of helping rural farmers in Africa and Latin America connect to global markets.” While agricultural commodities like cut-flowers connect the East African region to global markets, this connection is not inherently a net-positive. These risk factors are detailed later in this essay.

Running in parallel with the structural adjustments and advice given by development agencies, countries provide Foreign Direct Investment or FDI to coun-

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Means ‘the New Flower’

The name of Addis Ababa, capital of Ethiopia, means “the new flower.” Dr. Marshall A. Howe, newly elected director of the New York Botanical Garden, said yesterday. Contrary to general belief, Dr. Howe said, Addis Ababa is a city of trees and many gardens, its direct sunlight and high elevation making it an excellent spot for flower growing.

In 1930, when the Emperor Haile Selassie was crowned, numerous American flowering plants, new to Ethiopia, were sent there as coronation gifts. These included choice varieties of dahlias from the Botanical Garden, contributed by Dr. Howe, who received a personal letter of thanks from the ruler.

The garden announced yesterday that wide beds on each side of the entrance opposite Fordham Hospital were filled with numerous varieties of canna in a range of colors and forms “that will be a surprise to persons who know these exotic flowers only by the standard red and yellow types.”

The New York Times
Published: August 1, 1935
Copyright © The New York Times

Bottom: Women tending to roses within one of Ethiopia’s vast rose greenhouses. Photo courtesy of Bloomberg News.
tries with industries believed to be lucrative. In the map on the following spread, we can see the flow of money into Ethiopia, paralleling those countries which consume cut flowers from the East African region.

**Flowers in Flux**


Cities are alive in constant flux. This city, Addis Ababa, means the new flower. Addis, the capital of Ethiopia, fluxes vertically and along its edges. Edges re-arrive as the center, petals grow, fall, compost and create new flowers.

Today, the capital serves as the diplomatic hub of the continent, and the social, political and economic engine of the country. The fertile lowlands surrounding the capital Addis Ababa are now home to dozens of new greenhouses.

For many, cut-flowers have brought new income as well as social and environmental issues. For a few, the cut flowers signal economic development and much desired foreign currency.

This land was historically the domain of subsistence farmers. Today, farmers are increasingly displaced by urbanization and a growing floriculture industry.\[3\]

**The First Rose Farm in Ethiopia**

In 2000, the head of a successful Ugandan conglomerate visited Ethiopia seeking potential business opportunities. That year, Ethiopia got its first rose farm. He arrived intending to explore the banking and bottled water industries but was struck by the conditions that placed floriculture at the top of his list. Warm days, cold nights.

Fertile soil. Competitive air freight, fuel, and electricity costs. The decision was made for him. Ethiopia's federal government provided a thirty-year land lease and loan for thirty percent of the project. An irrigation system was developed by a company based in Israel. Floriculture managerial staff were relocated from Kenya and Israel to run the farm. This was how the first rose farm in Ethiopia was created.\[4\]

The farm was almost immediately profitable. By 2002, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi ‘green-lighted’ the -


Trajectories of the New Flower: Mapping Ethiopia’s Foreign Direct Investment and the Global Cut Flower Trade

This map shows the trajectories and flows of the cut flower industry from and beyond Ethiopia. Flower farms are a major industry in Ethiopia, which is supported by a large amount of Foreign Direct Investments from other countries. On top of that, much of the flowers that symbolizes Netherlands origins from Ethiopia. This maps hopes to illustrate the flows of capital and goods of these flowers through the geographic borders.

The data in the map refers to 2015, unless stated otherwise. The minimum requirement for drawing a trade line for cut flowers is USD 40 million.

Foreign Direct Investments to Ethiopia 2019 (USD million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Investment (USD million)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2,865</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>2,213</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>1,525</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from World Floriculture Map produced by Rabobank Group, Netherlands. Mapped by Author.
How did the Rose find its way to Addis Ababa?

In the 1990s, Ethiopia was a non-player in the global flower market.

By 2015, Ethiopia was a top global player, contributing 9 percent of the global flower market.

In 2010, Ethiopia's federal government decided that floriculture would become a top priority for economic development. The Former Mayor of Addis Ababa, Arkebe Oqubay's Made in Africa: Industrial Policy in Ethiopia details floriculture, leather, and concrete production - as three
ROSES AS POLITICAL BACKDROP

In Ethiopia, every successive regime of the last century has utilized flowers in political displays.

The Emperor of Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Haile Selassie, is presented with a bouquet of flowers during a visit to Great Britain. In October 1935 Italian troops invaded his country, after which Mussolini declared the King of Italy as Emperor of Abyssinia. Photo courtesy of Getty Images.

The Emperor of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) is greeted by President John F. Kennedy and First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy upon his arrival at Union Square in Washington D.C., 1963. Photo courtesy of Kennedy Library and Museum.

Roses used to decorate the casket of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, 2012. Photo courtesy of AFP.

President Obama with his national security adviser, Susan E. Rice, right, and Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen Hassen of Ethiopia during a state dinner in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2015. Mr. Obama was being toasted by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn. Photo courtesy of Doug Mills/New York Times.

Mengistu Haile Mariam the head of the Provisional Military Administrative Council of Ethiopia on his arrival in Tbilisi, 1978. Photo courtesy of Sputnik / Alamy Stock Photo.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia, President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and President Isaias Afwerki gathered, 2019. Three bundles of roses are propped on tables surrounding the leaders. Photo courtesy of Office of the Prime Minister, Ethiopia.
core industries the Ethiopian government prioritizes to grow the economy.[5]

Oqubay’s chapter “Beyond Bloom and Bust? Development and Challenges in Floriculture” illustrates Ethiopia's floriculture industry's fine details. This federal prioritization resulted in seventy-four new firms entering Ethiopia's rose industry in 2010, hiring more than 50,000 workers.[6]


The land was obtained from local farmers. On some accounts, this occurred through "private leasing" while in others, this was done through "land grabs" [7][8].

Today, the industry has expanded beyond roses to include carnations (dianthus caryophyllus), baby's-breath (gypsophila), St. John's wort (hypericum), and sea holly (eryngium). The fertile lowlands surrounding the capital Addis Ababa are now home to dozens of new greenhouses, the vast majority of flower farms are located along the main access roads within Addis Ababa's peripheries, providing close proximity to the capital's international airport. [9]

**Logistics Landscape**

Ethiopian roses move from sites of cultivation in and around Addis Ababa to sites of transport, either Bole International Airport of the Djibouti Seaport. The industry is backed by a robust logistics landscape, including the Chinese funded Ethiopia-Djibouti corridor and Addis Ababa Bole International Airport cargo system. From here, flowers enter the market.


Data and Graph courtesy of NBoE/EiA. Monthly Export of Flowers from Ethiopia. Exports rise in the winter, as European competitors are unable to grow.
Flower markets are classified broadly as auction markets and direct markets. There are auction markets in Amsterdam, Dubai, and Germany. The biggest is FloraHolland, with 4,000 employees, a €4.35 billion turnover, and 12.4 billion products traded in 2013. Close to 80 percent of Ethiopian cut flowers are sold on Dutch auction markets. Today, an estimated 180,000 Ethiopians work in the cut-flower industry. Most of these jobs are about the precise cultivation and processing of flowers for export.

As a landlocked nation, Ethiopia relies entirely on the Ethiopia-Djibouti Corridor and its related industrial forms built on a global supply chain. Djibouti’s seaport accounts for ninety-five percent of landlocked Ethiopia’s imports and exports.

The Export-Import Bank of China primarily built the railway for transporting goods from the seaport. The bank contributed $2.9 billion of the $3.4 billion. Over the past two decades, Ethiopia has put massive investment into its rail infrastructures, as illustrated on the timeline in the following section.

This is the end of the commodity chain - though the story of the rose continues locally, raising a number of issues for those employed by the industry or tending to land sought by the industry. The following section provides a summary of these challenges.

Challenges of the Industry: Colonial Roots

The East African cut-flower industry began in Kenya under British rule.

British farmers formed agricultural cooperatives on the shores of Lake Naivasha, outside Nairobi. Kenyan people faced immense violence and expulsion from their ancestral lands. Expulsion and murder were the primary methods by which the British took Kenyan land and developed it for export industries. Export goods


[10] Djibouti’s seaport accounts for ninety-five percent of landlocked Ethiopia’s imports and exports.

[11] Over the past two decades, Ethiopia has put massive investment into its rail infrastructures, as illustrated on the timeline in the following section.

ETHIOPIA’S RAIL PROJECTS

LRT and ADR Timeline 2005 to 2018
Source: Rode, Terreffe and da Cruz 2020

Above: Archival document illustrating the construction of the Djibouti-Ethiopia Railway under Emperor Menelik II. A Swiss engineer named ‘Ilg’ was commissioned to design the railway.

Right: The timeline illustrates the scale and breadth of investment in Ethiopian rail systems. Timeline courtesy of LSE Cities.
Step 1: Roses are to tended to. Insect mites and dead foliage are removed.

Step 2: Roses are consolidated for shipping to processing warehouse.

Step 3: At processing warehouse, roses are cleaned of excess foliage, allowing for lighter shipping load and reduced sea / air transport costs.

Step 4: Trimmed roses are packed into protective cardboard sheets.

Step 5: Roses are packed into perforated cardboard boxes.

Step 6: 90% of Ethiopia’s roses are shipped to The Netherlands. From here, roses are transported to auction houses.

Photos courtesy of ET Highland Flora, Minaye Flowers, William Davison/Bloomberg News, Lex Van Lieshout and ANP/AFP.
were transported through the construction and operation of the Kenya Uganda Railway Line. By 1942, massive resistance to British colonization mounted in the Mau Mau Movement, a coalition of tribes that collaborated to expel the British from Kenya. Central here was the displacement and land loss under British rule.

Upon independence in 1963, the land developed for colonial British export industries was converted into cut-flower farms. Here we find a through line from British colonization to the Kenyan cut-flower industry today.

Ethiopia, after seeing the booming industry in it’s neighboring Kenya for decades, sought to get in on the action. Many of the risk factors of the industry have been well documented in the Kenyan case, and as such, provide an important reference for Ethiopia as it continues to pursue the industry.

**Contemporary Challenges**

Cut-flower industry capitalizes on what East African countries have locally available and are eager to offer - water, land, labor. In turn, these countries gain access to much needed foreign capital. Here, we no longer have colonization. We have international trade on unequal terms. What is undeniably a willing exchange at the federal and often municipal levels in both Ethiopia and Kenya, the exchange comes at immense cost.

Cut flower growers are “hypercognizant of the shortcomings of a Kenyan state that is ill equipped, in the aftermath of structural adjustment, to provide social services and has no authority to track or limit resource use.” [13] In practice this means water, land and human resources are exploited for capital interests.

**Water and the Cut-Flower Industry**

Water sources are contaminated – Kenya’s Lake Naivasha, designated as a wetland of international importance under UNESCO’s Ramsar Convention, feeds flowers grown for export and is the drain for grey water from the flower farms. Flowers are grown using pesticides, and so too are all plant and animal life tied to the lake.

In the Ethiopian context, flower farms in Ziway apply the same method alongside Ziway Lake.

---

[13] Ibid.
Abebeye Hoy
Seleshe Demasse

My flower, I say ho
I come saying ho
Hoping my mother’s here
Hoping my father’s here
Hoping my uncle’s here
Going my aunt is here
Ho we come saying ho
Saying Enkutatash
Saying New Year
Have you seen the flower?
My relatives
Go on one by one
Until I break wood and build a house
I don't have a fence, let alone a house
I'll sleep outside counting the stars

Excerpt from "Abebeye Hoy", a classic song of Ethiopian New Year, performed by a groups of children as they float from house to house gifting sonic blessings for the New Year. Full lyrics in Appendix.
Chemical Exposures and the Cut-Flower Industry

In order to preserve flowers for international export, they are grown using chemical pesticides. For workers who handle the flowers, this poses a major health risk. Images from flower farms in Ethiopia show workers handling these flowers without gloves. Workers are not provided with gloves that protect the length of their arms as they handle the flowers all day. This exposes workers directly to chemicals dangerous to human health. The exposure to the chemicals has resulted in miscarriages in case study farm Sher Ethiopia.

Workers are provided masks not designed for the hot climates of peak growing season in Ethiopia – workers overheat, need to take masks off, breathe fumes, and get various health risks. Companies often build schools and hospitals near their greenhouses – these hospitals are primarily treating employees facing adverse health impacts from the cut-flower industry.

Taxes, Wages and Benefits

Many employees of flower farms are hired only on a part-time basis, meaning they never qualify for benefits that farms provide full-time workers. Work-ers deserve fair wages, the industry should pay taxes for their profit. In the case study of Sher Ethiopia, taxes were not paid for years 2014-2015. [15]

The pretence of social capitalism clouds the core issues at play in the industry: widespread exploitation and contamination of natural resources, unsafeworking conditions, low wages and displacement.

Cut-Flowers as Driver of Unplanned Urbanization

Megan A. Styles’ 2019 “Roses from Kenya: Labor, Environment, and the Global Trade in Cut Flowers” notes of the Kenyan context, “Since the cut flower industry became successful here in the 1990s, Naivasha’s population has ballooned from around thirty thousand to more than three hundred thousand, spurring rapid, unplanned development.

Living conditions vary widely depending on how much residents can afford to pay in rent; some houses are made of stone, others wood, and others sheet metal over wooden frames. Most live without access to electricity, running water, or formal waste disposal services.

Critics allege that the majority of flower farm employees are underpaid and work in poor conditions. Many flower farm workers find only temporary employment in the industry and never qualify for the benefits that farms provide full-time workers.” Kenya’s cut flower industry creates ripple effects on the local market and urban form of Nairobi’s peripheral towns.

Here too, we might speculate on the potential outcomes for the cut-flower industry emerging in the peripheries of Addis Ababa.

In the map on the following spread, potential industrial expansion of the cut-flower industry is explored through a speculative mapping analysis. Using known drivers of the industry’s growth in Ethiopia, proximity to roads, export infrastructure and viable cropland are used to project areas that could be taken by actors of the cut-flower industry.

These zones of potential expansion illustrate areas that could become zones of rapid unplanned urban expansion as illustrated in the case study of Naivasha. Local farmers in these zones are at risk of losing their land to the cut-flower industry.

These multi-fold issues need to be faced. The question now is, through what means? In the following essay, "To Sonify a Flower: What Can Sounding Flowers Do?", we will explore the capacity of sound to discuss the layers of flowers in Ethiopia.
Magnitudes of Flower Farms: Mapping Potential Industrial Expansion of the Cut Flower Industry

This map explores the potential expansion of the cut flower industry from the city of Addis Ababa and beyond. The flower industry is heavily supported by varied infrastructures to facilitate its import and export requirements, including roads and railways to other city centres, and airports to the international market. Using the existing infrastructure, proximity to current flower farms and existing land used for cropland, this map presents potential areas that could be taken up by international companies for future flower production.

Road Network and Airport Infrastructure Data from MapServer Ethiopia project. https://www.ethiopia-mapserver.org/about-us.html
Ye Deji Abeba Negn
Abyssinia Band

Dont say I don't get thirsty,

Dont say I don't get hungry

Don't say I don't get cold

Don't say I don't heat up

You boast just like a lion's hunter

You boast just like an elephant's hunter

I can't avoid you like the prevailing wind

Hush, please, hush ×8

I am a flower at your yard

Look after me

I am a flower at your yard

GROWTH OF ADDIS ABABA

1975

1975 - 1985

1985 - 1995

1995 -
To Sonify a Flower:
What Can Sounding Flowers Do?

This essay asks: What can sounding flowers do? As noted in the introduction and previous essay on the Rose in Addis Ababa, flowering plants play a key role in the world's ecosystems. In the case of Ethiopia, we see how two flowers, Adey Abeba and the Rose have contributed to the formation of space in the city. The Rose, while an important driver of economic growth, presents a number of challenges to Ethiopia. Importantly, we see some of the major risks of the cut-flower industry's presence in the Ethiopian capital: reports of ongoing industrial land-grabs and, through speculative mapping, we see how the cut-flower industry has the potential to decimate small scale agriculture in Addis Ababa's surrounding bread basket.

This essay emerged from the inquiry: Through which modes do Ethiopians discuss flowers? This inquiry created a cascade effect, as it became clear that sonics are the predominant mode through which Ethiopians imagine flowers.

If sonics are the mode through which flowers are imagined in the Ethiopia, how might sonics function in this research?

We will begin with an introduction to the origin of Ethiopia's embodied sonic relationships with flowers, charting how one scale of music, said to have emerged from birds nearly 1500 years ago, is used almost exclusively in flower music of Ethiopian New Year.

This Ethiopian sonic floral mode, anchi hoye, is then examined in a cross section of lyrical imaginaries: we'll look at sacred Meskel music from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; traditional songs of Ethiopian New Years; rich poetry from urban troubadours called azmaris and flowers as imagined by a handful of pop-musicians from the last 100 years. Through lyrical transcription, translation and analysis, we find that flowers play a number of roles in Ethiopian imaginaries...
ies. This polyphonic functionality is activated here to suggest that anchi hoye as a sonic mode may be well-suited as the method of disseminating the findings of this research. As such, the thesis findings on Ethiopia's shifting embodied relationships with flowers are sonified in the anchi hoye music scale of flowers.

My hypothesis is that if one wishes to bring forward a new conversation on flowers in Ethiopia, this new conversation will reach its widest audience using the existing mode through which Ethiopians imagine flowers. Furthermore, this new function of Ethiopia's flower music scale attempts to address critiques of inequitable participation in shaping of Ethiopia's latest floral imaginings in Addis Ababa.

Can anchi hoye be adapted to discuss Addis Ababa's shifting urban terrain? If so, how?

Might the predominant mode of floral discourse, anchi hoye, be best suited to create broad participation in conversations around emerging and longstanding issues of importance around flowers in Ethiopia? Below, we'll orient towards the anchi hoye scale, beginning with its origins.
Flower Music

200,000 years ago, human beings evolved to think creatively outside.\[15\] Flowers, long heralded for their abilities to center humans have grounded Ethiopians for millennia. Ethiopia, a land built in tempo with its flowers, celebrates its New Year on September 11-12 alongside the bloom of Adey Abeba flowers across the hills of the country. From September to November, Ethiopia’s fallow plateaus, grasslands, forest margins, river valleys and mountain slopes are carpeted in brilliant two-tone yellow pointillism.

In Ethiopia, Adey Abeba signifies the end of the long, rainy season and the beginning of the dry and sunny season. The yellow color, in the Ethiopian culture as well as in many other cultures, is a symbol of love, peace and hope.\[16\] In the period when Adey Abeba blooms, a series of birds appear. These birds are called collectively Ye Meskel Wof.

The day is called Enkutatash. Enkutatash, meaning “gift of jewels” in the Amharic language of Ethiopia, signals a period of renewal for the country. Shaking off the old, shaking into the new – one of the most popular dances in the country is the rapid shaking of one’s shoulders in tempo with music.

Alongside the blooming flowers, young women and girls gather and sing songs of celebration, moving from home to home like seeds blowing in the wind. The songs illustrate the ‘glimmer of hope in the minds of people expecting things to change for the better.’\[17\]

Absorbing the energy in the air, the songs are said to come from the birds.

Flowers by way of Yared and the Birds

The first sonification of Ethiopian landscape is attributed to a child named Yared, born in the year 505 AD.

About 1500 years ago, at the tender age of six, Yared, was sent by his mother to study at the Axum Tsion (Zion) Church where his uncle Aba Gedeon served as the treasurer, in the booming Kingdom of Aksum, the former Ethiopian capital.

Yared struggled with his education. Falling far behind his peers, he was subject to corporal punishment by his uncle. One day, Yared decided to leave Aksum for Medebay, a nearby town.

On the road he was caught


in heavy rain, finding himself stuck under a tree seeking shelter as the downpour enveloped the land around him. As he sat under the tree, he watched a caterpillar attempt to scale the tree, falling, ascending, falling, in a rhythm of determination.

Yared then heard three birds singing and found himself ease into a spiritual trance. The birds, Ge’ez, Izil & Arraraysangrichmelodiclayers so beautifully, Yared transcribed what he heard, cre-
Diagram showing the four seasons of Ethiopia, alongside the series of seasonal festivals celebrated across the country using the corresponding hymns from Saint Yared’s bird listening. Adapted from Wâlaleñ Emeru, The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Festivals of the Finding of the True Cross and Epiphany: Temporal, Spatial and Symbolic Aspects: Anthropological Perspective, 1st ed. (Addis Ababa [Ethiopia]: s.n., 2007).

Excerpt from Saint Yared’s Deggwa. Notations said to come from birds above each line of hymn.

Ating a system of notation in the process.

Those transcriptions were gathered in a book of holy hymns called Deggwa, which form the foundation of Ethiopian Orthodox sonic-theology. These sacred notations consisted of dashes, curves, and dots each with distinct meaning. These hymns are divided to represent the four seasons, and accordingly, seasonal festivals such as Meskel and Ethiopian New Year are celebrated across the country using the corresponding hymns. The scales Yared heard from the 3 birds form the foundation of the pen-
Yared listening to the birds Ge'ez, Izil and Araray. (Artist unknown)

Another interpretation of Yared listening to the birds (Artist unknown)

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Yared’s Notational System from the Birds

Notational system created by Saint Yared.

tatonic music scales of secular Amharic music in Ethiopia today.

The music of Ethiopian New Year uses a scale from Saint Yared’s bird listening.

This scale is called Anchi Hoye. Anchi Hoye is a 5 note pentatonic music scale, with a doubling of the 5th and 6th note in a high and low octave.

Anchi Hoye is one flowering from Ethiopia’s rich history of sonifying landscape.

Anchi Hoye:

Anchi Hoye major and minor scales depicted in Western notational system.
Other Scales from the Birds

The other scales used in popular Ethiopian music illustrated in Western notational system. Scales from Bisrat Tamene, Krar method: for the development of Ethiopian traditional musical instruments technic (Ethiopia, Addis Ababa: B. Tamene, 1998).

"The French composer Oliver Messiaen once said that the early morning song of birds gives us a hint of what the harmonies of heaven might be like. I used to complain that I didn’t want to sound like a bird. Now I realize that it is the flute player’s privilege."

- Paula Robison

Collectively, there are 10 species collectively called 'Ye Meskel Woʃ' which translates to the 'the Bird(s) of Meskel' Some of the birds that dot the skyline during Ethiopian New Year and Meskel in September. Top left is the Northern Red Bishop; Top right is the Village Indigo Bird; Bottom Left is the Pin-tailed Whydah; the Bottom Right is the Yellow-mantled Widowbird. Images courtesy of eBird.
What can we learn from the story of Yared?

*I am the drum.
You are the drum, and we are the drum.
Rhythm is the soul of life.
The whole universe revolves in rhythm.
Everything and every human action revolves in rhythm.*

- Babatunde Olatunji

The Scale of Flowers

Yared was a listener. A polyglot fluent in the rich sounds of the Ethiopian landscape, finding in nature’s rhythms, the presence of the divine and an offering that has served as balm for countless Ethiopians through time.

The story of Yared can be considered too as an example of the impact of sound on one’s spatial experiences and the shape of the built environment.

Yared’s listening has gone forth to shape much of contemporary Ethiopian life and huge swathes of the country’s built environment. As outlined in earlier essays, Yared’s listenings to the birds have made their way into Ethiopia’s Meskel festival, with the largest Meskel celebration taking place in Addis Ababa’s largest public space, Meskel Square. The music used to celebrate Ethiopian New Years is also derived from Yared’s listening.

We’ll now examine how Yared’s listening has gone forth to shape one Ethiopian epistemology of conservation, inspiring Ethiopians to protect some of Ethiopia’s last pockets of biodiversity. We’ll then briefly outline the range of built spaces that integrate music derived from Yared’s listening, before turning to lyrical analysis of flower music.

Church Forests

Ethiopia has lost 95% of its native forests due to human activity in the last 100 years. Many of the last remnants of biodiversity are held in the forests surrounding Orthodox church buildings, which are protected as a tenet of faith.

To their guardians, each forest is a miniature Garden of Eden and essential to the dignity of the building.

In the Church Forests, one

[18] Dr. Meg Lowman and Dr. Alemayehu Wassie Eshete 2022

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[18] Dr. Meg Lowman and Dr. Alemayehu Wassie Eshete 2022
Church Forests are contained using a retaining wall which prevents animals from grazing and mark the border of sacred forests which are not to be used for firewood or grazing. Church forest photos courtesy of Kieran Dodds.

"The trees are the clothes of the church"

- Priest at Robit Bahita Church
can hear the rhythms of the land and people using the scales Yared heard from the birds.

**Sound Spaces in Ethiopia**

Where Ethiopian music is playing, there is a good chance it has been influenced by Yared's scales. In historic music district in Addis Ababa, Kazanchis, concert halls, private homes, streets and the cars on them, Yared’s listenings resonate.
Flowers as Illustrated in Ethiopian Music

This essay details flowers as imagined in a cross section of Ethiopian music. Songs are the dominant mode in which Ethiopians speak about flowers, and often, about Ethiopian women as flowers. The first stage of the research was to understand the pedagogy of flowers in an Ethiopian context. From the documentation and translation of this practice, close reading can take place, allowing for a broader audience to engage in the discourse of Ethiopian flowers while also creating the foundation for the creation of new music from this tradition of floral music. Beginning with the sacred Meskel music from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; we turn to the rich poetry from two urban troubadours called azmaris.

From here we turn to flowers as imagined by four popular musicians in Addis Ababa from the last 100 years, here providing an insight into how floral imaginaries shift in the Ethiopian capital. We conclude with traditional songs of Ethiopian New Years; here adapted and rerecorded in a popular compilation album.

Through lyrical transcription, translation and analysis, we find that flowers play a number of roles in Ethiopian imaginaries.

A flower can be a religious symbol, a human, a flower, a city or a nation, depending on how the performer situates it lyrically.
Setlist

_Meskel Abeba_
Orthodox Tewahedo, Zemari Besufikad Andargachew

_Abeba Abeba_
by Betsat Seyoum and Abbebe Fekade

_Alegntaye_
Tlahoun Gessesse

_Abeba Messeletch_
Alemayhu Eshete

_Ye Deji Abeba Negn_
Abyssinia Band

_Yene Abeba_
Aster Kebede

_Enkutatash_
Yonas, Elsa, Betty

_Awide Amet_
Asfaw Tsgay

_Eyoha_
Demere, Elsa, Betty

_Abebaye Hoy_
Seleshe Demasse
Meskel Abeba
Orthodox Tewahedo, Zemari Besufikad Andargachew

Meskel flower, beautiful flower
Adey abeba, precious flower
The cross lived buried
After the crucifixion
Elleni the brave
Has found the cross
Meskel flower, beautiful flower
Adey abeba, precious flower
The Jews littered the area
Out of spite
But the priest still prayed
Where the cross was set up
Meskel flower, beautiful flower
Adey abeba, precious flower
The rivers and streams
And valleys alike
Testify to your glory

With their beauty and allure
Meskel flower, beautiful flower
Adey abeba, precious flower
Meskel flower, beautiful flower
Adey abeba, precious flower
The cross lived buried
After the crucifixion
Elleni the brave
Has found the cross
Meskel flower, beautiful flower
Adey abeba, precious flower
Meskel flower, beautiful flower
Adey abeba, precious flower
Flower, flower the city of Gondar

The flower is where I found you

I’ve been all around looking for the flower.

I have a guest,

A stud from Gondar

Will not taste anything but a bouquet of injera

And yogurt

Gondar, Gondar

Make me Gondar.

When what you eat serves you,

When you get what you want,

He had asked me out in Gondar

Hey my love, hey my friend

Addis Ababa,

The city of Gondar

How will the day come?

With the wind rustling,

Creaking the floors

I was waiting for you,

Thinking you’d come.

I don’t trust the roads

Only other people walking up and down

Ahh my love, my love

My country my country, don’t they say my country

Feel it deep when they talk bad about my country

There is no simple person

Left his country and was found by the river

There is no simple person
Yes that spice
He brought the ginger
St. Samuel is here
I remember what he ordered
Hey, Gondar, Gondar
Make me Gondar
When what you eat serves you,
When you get what you want,
Hey my love, hey my friend
Hey my love, hey my friend
Without the shotgun
One that bursts heads
My city is ‘belesa’
‘Malta estifanos’

I don't have it on my mom’s side
I don't have it on my dad’s side
My eyes had magic
I bewitched him.

Who is like me,
Unlucky?

Instead of finishing my plate
Left it for someone else
My mighty stomach
One that moved with the wind
My killer, my killer
Let alone the castle Fasil built
We remember the oak tree in the corner
My killer, my killer
Hey my love, hey my friend

My country’s child,
My mirror, my jewel,
What, have I done you wrong?
That my heart jumps when I see you?
How are you, my family?
Hey my love, hey my friend
Flower, flower the city of Gondar
The Flower is where I saw you
My country ‘wegeram’ my name ‘ambaras’
The winds raised me
Feeding me crops, feeding me crops

What is the problem
We’re all our country’s own
Whoever touches you,
His stomach meets a knife
Whoever dares to, his stomach meets a knife
Hey my love, hey my friend
Love with my country’s child
Hey my love, hey my friend
My heart is with you.
Alegntaye
Tlahoun Gessesse

I've searched, but couldn't find your address.
Please, tell me where you are.
Are you sad or are you happy?
Are you comfortable or are you hurt?
I've searched but couldn't find your address?
Please, tell me where you are.

Selam (Greetings) to you, my beloved
How are you, my flower?
Selam (Greetings) to you, my beloved.
How are you, my flower?

I've lost where you live.
Where do I come to see you? I don't know what to do.
Oh where are you hiding from me?
Let me sneak in and see you, I miss you.

Selam (Greetings) to you, my beloved.
How are you, my flower?
Selam (Greetings) to you, my beloved.
How are you, my flower?
Selam (Greetings) to you, my beloved.
How are you, my flower?
She looks like a flower, our girl today
Today our daughter looks beautiful,
She looks like a spring flower,
Today our son looks handsome,
He looks like a spring flower,

She said goodbye to her relatives,
She left her childhood friends,
Childhood is gone,
no more dancing,

Let her see her seed in her turn.
May the rain of love wash over you,
May you sow and reap,
May you birth and kiss,
My friends problem is my own,

May your lives be filled with peace, and health.
Friends and family put your hands together,
Move your shoulders side to side,
Today is the day, there's more to come,
This is what eating together is for.
Ye Deji Abeba Negn
Abyssinia Band

I am a flower at your yard
Look after me
I am a flower at your yard
Look after me
Come visit me

Your garden's grape
When it's ripe, pluck it
When it's ripe, taste it
Come visit me

Dont say I don't get thirsty,
Dont say I don't get hungry
Don't say I don't get cold
Don't say I don't heat up
You boast just like a lion's hunter
You boast just like an elephant's hunter
I can't avoid you like the prevailing wind
I can't avoid you like the prevailing wind
Hush, please, hush ×8

I am a flower at your yard
Look after me
I am a flower at your yard
Look after me
Come visit me
Your garden's grape
When it's ripe, pluck it
When it's ripe, taste it
come visit me

Your garden's grape
When it's ripe, pluck it
When it's ripe, taste it

Don't say I don't get thirsty,
Don't say I don't get hungry,
Don't say I don't get cold,
Don't say I don't heat up,

You boast just like a lion's hunter
You boast just like an elephant's hunter
Like the prevailing wind, I can't avoid you
Like the prevailing wind, I can't avoid you
Hush, please, hush ×8


**Yene Abeba**

Aster Kebede

*Let it be, my flower*

*I've been defeated, my beauty*

*Defeated by your love, my flower*

*Love like the seeds my beauty*

*Let it be all over, my flower, my beauty*

*I won't tell you not to smile, my beauty*

*I am thirsty for it, my flower, my beauty*

*I won't tell you not to play*

*I crave your presence*

*Your love heats up*

*And burns my insides*

*I can't ever finish pouring Abay with a pot*

*I wish I could talk about you day and night*

*Like the lush green fields*

*Your height and your nature so beautiful*

*Made intentionally*

*Like the beautiful embroidery*

*You have a grace*

*That demands attention*

*My back hasn’t rested*

*The stress is a lot*

*Love like a dance*

*Moving it side to side, my beauty, my flower*

*Your roof and my roof*

*Our home protecting us*

*Your love indoctrinated on my body*

*When does my back rest my beauty*

*The stress it a lot my flower*

*Love like a dance my beauty*

*Moving it side to side my beauty, my flower*
Enkutatash
Yonas, Elsa, Betty

Enkutatash flower, Enkutatash flower
Enkutatash flower, Enkutatash flower
Welcome back, Enkutatash,
Beautiful and bold

The fields and mountains adorned by Adey Abeba
The month of Meskerem is here, Enkutatash
Accompanied by song, by Abebayehosh
Everyone longs for your arrival,

Your games and dance, your Abebayehosh
The fields and mountains adorned by Adey Abeba
The month of Meskerem is here, Enkutatash
Accompanied by song, by Abebayehosh
Everyone longs for your arrival,
Your games and dance, your Abebayehosh

Enkutatash flower, Enkutatash flower
Enkutatash flower, Enkutatash flower
Welcome back, Enkutatash,
Beautiful and bold

Abebayehosh, lem lem
My relatives
Go on one by one
Until I break wood and build a house
I don't have a fence, let alone a house
I'll sleep outside counting the stars
When I go inside afterwards
My step mother will scold me
Call my mom, my medicine
If she tightens her belt

Adey, like silver, be clear like the spring
Adey, like silver, be clear like the spring
Awide Amet
Asfaw Tsgay

Blessings in the New Year, she is here, bringing culture and happiness.

When the fire burns and the Demera is lit,

Come, come new year, come.

Our country’s culture is beautiful,

Easter, Christmas, the nailing of the cross.

One we remember with prayer and fasting

Look upon the harvest, the cattle and bread

While Muslims celebrate arafa mewlid, His faith in his own temple.

Come, come new year, come.

With joy and singing,

Elders and kids in their traditional clothes,

Its joyful to see the celebration.

Let’s sing, dance, hit the drums,

Let the country be filled by singing

Come, come new year, come.

Friends and relatives all together

Bread and wine on the mesob

Surrounded with love.

Known all over by our hospitality,

Sharing with community

Let alone on a celebration

It’s our culture to be generous

Come, come new year, come.

Keep us together, as we are.

Blessings of a friend, a mother, a father.

Its joyful to see our country’s culture.

May the sick be healed,

The poor in abundance.

Let us see the New Year with health and peace.
Eyoha
Demere, Elsa, Betty

Eyoha eyoha, my flower
Eyoha eyoha, my flower

Children of Ethiopia, rise
From end to end

Eyoha eyoha, my flower
Eyoha eyoha, my flower

My countrymen, rise
From end to end

The ones in the Qola and Degas (tropical weather variations) of Wollo
You beautiful people, how are you?

The ones in Asatya and Dubity in Afar
Happy holidays

The ones in Dubity Mebrate Shewa
The ones in the beautiful Addis Ababa, Sheger
Happy Holidays

The ones in Nazret, Arsi and Bale
Wellega, Illubabor, Jimma
Harer, Dire Dawa, Jijiga

The ones who reside in Begemedir, Gondar, Gafat
Children of fatherland
How are you?

Eyoha! Eyoha! My flower!
**Abebaye Hoy**
Seleshe Demasse

I come saying ho
Hoping my mother’s here
Hoping my father’s here
Ho we come saying ho
Saying Enkutatash
Saying New Year

Have you seen the flower?

My relatives
Go on one by one
Until I break wood and build a house

I don’t have a fence, let alone a house
I’ll sleep outside counting the stars

When I go inside afterwards
My step mother will scold me
Call my mom, my medicine
If she tightens her belt
Flower, silver, be clear like the spring
Flower, our miracle, be clear like the spring

Stay esteemed, stay blessed
With a beautiful baby girl
With 50 lambs in your barn
Stay esteemed stay blessed

Shahiye shash flower
Again shash flower
Again beautiful flower
We saw the beauty and go into beauty’s house
My flower, I say ho
I come saying ho
Hoping my mother’s here
Hoping my father’s here
Hoping my uncle’s here
Going my aunt is here
Ho we come saying ho
Saying Enkutatash
Saying New Year

Have you seen the flower?

My relatives
Go on one by one
Until I break wood and build a house

I don’t have a fence, let alone a house
I’ll sleep outside counting the stars

When I go inside afterwards
My step mother will scold me

Call my mom my medicine
If she tightens her belt
Flower, silver, be clear like the spring
Flower, our miracle, be clear like the spring

Shahiye shash flower
Again shash flower
Again beautiful flower
We saw the beauty and go into beauty's house
Africans Don’t Make Parks: The Obscured Seeing and Exclusion of Africa from Landscape Architecture

“Quite simply it is the desire—one might indeed say the need—in Western psychology to set Africa up as a foil to Europe, as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar, in comparison with which Europe’s own state of spiritual grace will be manifest.”


Landscape Architecture, as a discipline, emerged from 18th Century Western Europe. Denis Cosgrove cites landscape’s origins in the Renaissance, where it came to be “a dimension of European elite consciousness”, ultimately to become a “significant aspect of taste.”[1]

Landscape is both the subject and object of human agency. Landscape entered the English lexicon in the early sixteenth century to describe Dutch panel paintings of rural scenery. The English “landscape” grew from the Dutch “landschap” and German “landschaft”. The process of transforming European land in this era prioritized three key aspects, clearing woodland, draining marshland and reclaiming wastelands.[3]

As manifest in art, painters could add and remove trees, landforms and the like to compose realistic and ‘true’ scenes for elites that would commission them. Alongside the development of Europe from a feudal to capitalist structure, landscape found an advocate in capitalism, as it served as engine for huge alterations in the relationship of humans and land. Through paint-


ing, those with capital could illustrate an idealized pastoral thematic. Here, idle and content people serve as landscape, content bodies that work the land while generating excess capital outside of their reach.

This carries forward in the so-called New World of the United States where illustrations of content enslaved people serve the same purpose. Landscape painters provide labor, depict labor, and placate those beneficiaries of labor. That which is unaligned with refined European tastes was to be removed. Things became picturesque in Europe and messy elsewhere.

When Europeans came to the so-called New World, they “subjugated the North American continent” and its millions of inhabitants to European modes of material production and landscape relations. When Europeans came to the constellation of peoples to their south in the late nineteenth and mid twentieth centuries this subjugation ensued, with varying results. At the heart of the scramble for Africa, Mudimbe writes was the “domination of physical space, the reformation of natives minds and the integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective.”

William John Thomas Mitchell, echoing Valentin-Yves Mudimbe writes that, “landscape is a particular historical formation associated with European imperialism.” If we follow Mudimbe, Mitchell and Cosgrove’s reasoning, Europe attempted to shape the African continent through similar methods as it did the North American continent.

The discourse and praxis of Landscape studies paradigm in the West is one of erasure. And indeed the logic flows of erasure bear their roots in political soils – the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, a Spanish-Portuguese agreement to divide newly ‘discovered’ lands outside of Europe; the arrival the 1884 Berlin Conference, organized by Otto von Bismark, resulting in the General Act of the Berlin Conference in effort to overwrite existing human-land formations on African continent; Herman Sörgel’s Atlantropa project in the 1920s – building a single continent of African and Europe by damming the Mediterranean Sea, the Strait of Gibaltar, the Dar-

[5] Ibid. 5
[7] Ibid. 2.
danelles and the Congo River. Here, Europe and Africa would become one. The 1944 Brazzaville Conference placing Brazzaville, Congo as the symbolic capital of the Free France movement. The logic of dominion, era- sure, land and space reiterated again and again leading up and through landscape.

“Niger is now the southern border of Europe”, one European ambassador said to Refugees Deeply in 2018. This same year, the European Union paid the government of Niger the sum of one billion euros for development, with hundreds of millions designated for anti-migration projects. Africa has been widely excluded from the literature and discipline of landscape, while superimposed upon, overwritten on, objectified through the tool book of landscape in political and built arenas. Across time and space, landscape expanded and contracted beyond its “initial painterly roots” to disciplines ranging from urban and regional planning, civil engineering, international relations, architecture, and ecology, and temporal issues areas ranging from Feudalism, Enlightenment, Early Capitalism, Fordism, Post-Fordism, Post-Modernism, Neoliberalism, Humanism and Post-Humanism amongst others. And still, Africa is nowhere to be found.

Why is it that scholarship has given such an attentive eye to the formation of landscape as a discipline in North America and so little to the discipline in Africa? A 2013 review of the last 40 years of garden and landscape studies found only three articles on sub-Saharan Africa. [9]

Through which mechanisms have African landscapes created in the colonial era found attentive scholars to iron out their story and build their archive? Why is it that those landscapes created before colonialism and after colonialism remain omitted from the literature of the discipline? [10] If an African nation plants 350 million trees in a single day, is it a collective act of landscape architecture? [11] Is this not the embodiment of landscape, an entirely social project through which we signal ourselves and our relationship with nature? If a coalition of African nations endeavor to form a 4,846 mile cross-continental barrier of trees and other vegetation, is it a collective act of landscape architecture? If my grandmother in Addis Ababa builds a garden in her compound, is she a


Above: The Great Green Wall of the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI). Source: John Kappler, National Geographic, NASA Earth Observatory

Right: Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed planting a tree as part of federal efforts to reforest Ethiopia with billions of trees in the coming decade. Photo courtesy of Aron Simeneh

Seedlings in Kenya for the Great Green Wall Initiative. Photos courtesy of Ariel Poster and CNN.
landscape architect? What is at play in this “obscured seeing” of African landscape architecture?

In 1906 Isaka Seme’s stated:

“I would ask you not to compare Africa to Europe or to any other continent. I make this request not from any fear that such a comparison might bring humiliation upon Africa. The reason I have stated: a common standard is impossible...”

In this speech titled “The Regeneration of Africa” (1906), Seme responds to the mounting aspirations of European governments to integrate the European and African continents. Africa and Europe have long been in discourse. Some calling for exploitation, connection, some calling for isolation, and everything in between. In this process, sweeping attempts of analysis and integration of Africa have been made for centuries, though the field of African Landscape remains in its infancy.

As Chinua Achebe notes in his 2016 “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness”,

“I have neither the wish not the competence to embark on the exercise with the tools of the social and biological sciences but so more simply in the manner of a novelist responding to the famous book of European fiction...”

Achebe illustrates how Africa is the foil, the antithesis of Europe – the River Thames to the River Congo, one tranquil, one of darkness and frenzy. Should the two rivers meet, the former might fall “victim to an avenging recrudescence of the mindless frenzy of the first beginnings.”

In this vein, I approach the issue of African Landscape. I bear not the burden of translating and convincing an audience long comfortable with broad strokes of a monolithic Africa.

Impassioned academics have attempted to push the envelope by addressing “a kind of 21st-century racism that is undermining the development of our knowledge of environmental ethics and other fields of inquiry.”[12] Searching for the words that might convince one’s peers with worldviews cemented westward of yours reason for being, your language, your art, your head, your history, your kingdoms. As Toni Morrison notes, none of that is necessary.[13]

One might well spend a life-

time attempting to redress the historic and contemporary biases that place African landscapes as other, orient, dark, unknowable, non-human, non-worthy of study and non-applicable to the west and its disciplinary models. This certainly is one pathway towards an African landscape integrated into the predominant western discourses on landscape. But is this the route which builds generatively?

The task at hand is to build new frameworks of agency, self and cross-cultural knowing for people of African descent. To do so, we first outlined the major frameworks at play in the subject formation of landscape in Europe. In the next section, we will catch wind of the socio-structural forces at play in the exclusion of Africa from the study of landscape. From here, we will begin to illustrate key socio-structural forces that can drive forward new frameworks of African landscape.

OBSCURED SEEING, LANDING, KNOWING

Building an African Landscape framework rooted in agency, self and cross-cultural knowing requires attentive engagement with the existing literature. What new knowledge has been produced about landscape since the discipline first emerged?

Of central importance here, is the shortage of research and literary discourse on African landscape. How might this gap begin to close? Is it a gap one wants to close? In one of the few attempts to address the gap in the literature of African Landscape, John Beardsley and Dumbarton Oaks convened the conference “Cultural Heritage Landscapes in Sub-Saharan Africa” in 2016, hoping to gather a range of thinkers to address the “oversight” of Africa from the discipline of garden and landscape studies.

In response to this convening, critics raised questions regarding the working definition of landscape in Africa. Davies asserts the core challenge of the volume is in defining the “nature of landscape and what sets it apart from “space,” “nature,” “environment”, etc.” As discussed in earlier sections, we know the English language dictionary definitions of landscape emerge from the origin of landscape in European art. As landscape’s definition broadened through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to today, landscape looks to architecture, ecology, conservation, and environmental psychology. What do we mean when we say landscape in Africa?

The following section urges...
Binary Complementarity:

Towards Forwards-Backwards African Landscape Theory

This essay continues the trajectory of landscape. In the previous essay, we examined landscape emerging from Europe, its processes of seeing and unseeing. Here, we examine landscape emerging from Africa. Of particular interest here are embodied engagements land and memory ritualized by the constellations of peoples indigenous to the African continent.

Drawing on Sophie Oluwole’s work around binary complementarity, Towards Forwards-Backwards African Landscape Theory critically engages with three distinct understandings of land and memory in East Africa – the Oromo past-present-future connection through *Finna*, the Amhara *Tizita* tradition (nostalgic memory) and *Somali Nomadic Presentness*. Each cultivated over generations living with and transforming East African landscapes in present day Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. For the purposes of this essay, scope will be limited to Oromo, Amhara and Somali memory and landscape studies in Ethiopia.

This is to say, there are thousands of pathways to the story of African landscape – this essay provides a preliminary illustration of what opens up through engagement with three within a constrained geographic framework.

Other scholars may well take this as a call for further research and praxis to bring to the fore the memories and histories of connection to land in the African continent.

**BINARY COMPLEMENTARITY AS POPULARIZED BY SOPHIE OLUWOLE**

Oluwole (1935-2018) is one of Africa’s foremost philosophers.\[15\] Binary Complementarity, as popularized by Nigerian academic and philosopher Sophie -

Oluwole paves a way forward-backwards towards a deep knowing of the matter of landscape as seen in the West only possible through the foil or antimatter of African Landscape. Where Western philosophy has built its foundations in binary oppositions of true/false, white/black, Europe/Africa, West/Orient, light/dark, good/bad, reason/emotion, etc-Oluwole illustrates how many African philosophies integrate systems of binary complementarity. Here, we may find a potential route forward. The concept provides an avenue to reconcile opposites without negating their differences. This is a principle true to a range of African philosophies of land. In Mudimbe’s “The Invention of Africa” he writes, “While the greater part of [historic] Ethiopian literature is translated from foreign languages, these two books written by Abyssinians are imbued with their own native character… However, I would say that these flowers could not grow solely from the Ethiopian ground, unless they had been irrigated by external waters.” [16]

Generative ideas now held as ‘Ethiopian’ were cross-pollinated. In turn, through an understanding of binary complementarity, we can re-read Ethiopian Landscape and its severe ethnic conflicts for a path forward of mutual resilience.

Jalata writes, “When capitalism was developing in Western Europe in the late fifteenth century, the Oromo and Abyssinians started to confront each other on the issues of land, religion, and power in the Horn of Africa without dominating each other. Indeed, there is agency to be gained by activating the ‘problems’ at play; a shortage of white gaze, an absence from the literature, an unknowing and unperceiving. Here is the fertile land in which we might germinate new seeds, methods and intersections.

African Landscapes are ancient, nuanced, layered, polyphonic. So too should be the new discipline. African Landscape has never been about fitting into the narrow view of ‘Landscape’ as conceived in the West. The narrow field of Landscape studies has existed for fraction of the time African landscapes have existed. In what ways might one conceptualize African Landscape studies?

The constellations of peoples that live in the African continent have built unique ways of knowing and transforming land. Here, we will
delve into the ideas put forward by three of the peoples living in Ethiopia today. This same exercise could be conceived at any range of scales in the African continent: regionally, climatically, culturally, linguistically, economically, and so on. Consider the following an invitation to consider the limitless ways of conceiving land.

A NOTE ON ETHNICITY IN ETHIOPIA

“The very serious function of racism … is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being. Somebody says you have no language and so you spend 20 years proving that you do. Somebody says your head isn’t shaped properly so you have scientists working on the fact that it is. Somebody says that you have no art so you dredge that up. Somebody says that you have no kingdoms and so you dredge that up. None of that is necessary.”

- Toni Morrison, “A Humanist View” (1975)

The concept of ethnicity in Ethiopia is deeply rooted though increasingly problematic. Still, the nine ethnically based regional states of Ethiopia are built upon certain ethnic groups, empowering some with visibility, while disempowering others without. For our purposes here, we can refer to Mollenhauer’s 2011 definition of ethnicity which is “a collective ‘we-feeling’ to be both succinct and useful, as this encompasses shared language, belief in common origins, and a host of other subjectivities that come into play when identifying oneself according to ethnic group.”

Historic nation-building under Menelik II and rising ethnic tensions have given way to critiques of “ethno-national hierarchy” that excluded other ethnic groups from having political power and denigrated their cultural identity during the Imperial Era (pre-1974). In the Derg era (1974 - 91), public rhetoric of equality was underpinned by ethnic conflict due to inadequate resource allocation. Ethnic Federalism emerged in the post-Derg era (1991 - present, in which Ethiopia was divided into ethnically based regional states and allowing regional governing autonomy.

For instance, how might we juxtapose Ethio-ethnic traditions - the Amhara Tizita tradition with Oromo Finna systems and Somali Nomadic-Presentness? Or rather, how might Somali Presentness, cultivated through centuries of nomadic migration, be an antidote to Amhara nostalgic-memory or Tizita, cultivated through centuries of...
imperialism? Might Oromo deep ecological knowledge and indigenous sustainable development strategies be a tool for all in Ethiopia? As Ethiopia enters a new era of ethnic conflict, teetering between divisions and nationalisms and violence. Might the heart of the problem be the tool? If we integrate Sophie Oluwole’s reading of binary complementarity, we can find the stable center through the presence of each actor, fully.

**ETHIOPIAN UNDERSTANDINGS OF LANDSCAPE**

Ethiopia is a nation of 80+ ethnic groups and languages with an estimated population of 114 million people, forever in inward discourse, transforming and reconfiguring what land means in the country.

**For these millions of peoples, what does a responsive disciplinary framework of landscape mean?**

While indeed, each presented case of landscape and memory in East Africa can be bound into the prevalent frameworks of landscape studies, the presented cases bear agency when illustrated in tandem and beyond the grounds of landscape laid out by the pursuit of a European pictorial.

Land in Ethiopia is acted upon within two theoretical frameworks – predominately, land as ancestral right and the basic unit of survival, and secondarily, as understood by the Ethiopian state, land as a site for investment and ‘public ownership’. In practice, the constellations of people living in present day Ethiopia face a superimposed model of land applied at the federal level, which at present results in communities vying for visibility, culturally relevant and economically viable connections to land.

In the next section, we will delve into three othered connections to land to begin to build an image in our mind's eye of what responsive frameworks of landscape might be like.

**OTHERED SOMALI READINGS OF LANDSCAPE**

Listen to the call of the muezzin – it calls people to prayer;

Consider God, who created people, and the people who reject His commands

The prophets, and those who do not follow the saints

Those who took long, heavy spears against the elders of the Order

Those who have become children of the Christians and look on Europeans as their relatives

Those who of their own free will performed menial tasks for the infidels

Those who, though not
forced to do it, followed them and fawned on them

Those for whom Menelik is like a father who deals with their affairs

Those for whom Abyssinians have become God, and who babble prayers to them

Those who have hunted me out of the land of my God like wild game

Those who have driven me into the dusty sands of the desert. …

- Maxamed Cabdille Xasan

To be nomadic is to present. In times of bliss, resentment, abundance, scarcity, poverty. The Somali people of the Horn of Africa live across political borders, after having spent millennia mobile, nomadic, in flux with and through land, through seasons.

Poetry is at the core of Somali expressive culture and, until relatively recently, was composed, memorized, and disseminated in purely oral form. In 1991, nomadic pastoralists in Somalia constituted sixty percent of the countries then 5.7 million and over sixty percent of Somalia’s exports originate from Somalia’s nomadic population. At that time, the majority of human-land intersection was at the hands of nomadic people. Key interventions in landscape include the construction of mobile homesteads called Aqal Soomaali, herding of camels and raising children in close-knit family structures. In the dry season, Somali nomadic-pastoral life is marked by a “premium on the portability of belongings…a nomadic village gives an impression of austere simplicity.”

Over the following decades, nomadic impetuses have shifted. Across the Horn, Somali nomadic communities face increasing pressure to integrate into ‘settled populations’, here the issue being one of community agency, access to formal land ownership / leasing mechanisms, and cultural erasure. Somali communities in contemporary Ethiopia are bound within the demarcated state boundary the Somali National Regional State of Ethiopia, and tensions regularly reach a boiling point at border towns, resulting in “most residents in this part of Ethiopia…at some point in their life [has] been classified as either a refugee or an internally displaced person.” Carruth goes on to write, “Kinship, mobility, and migration remain vital to Somalis’ identities and their resilience in the face of repeated humanitarian crises and marginalisation from centres of power [in Ethiopia].” A people dis-
placed though ancestrally nomadic, a people of poets made silent in the role they play in the development of their lives and ancestral lands. May we remember, remain present enough to iterate and migrate towards viable futures.

**AMHARA UNDERSTANDINGS OF LAND: INTRODUCTION TO TIZITA**

"Outdoing yesterday, shouldering on today, borrowing from tomorrow, renewing yesteryears, comes Tizita comes hauling possessions."


“Tizita: A New World Interpretation” (2009)

Tizita. Tizita means nostalgic memory in Amharic. Tizita is also the name of a secular Ethiopian pentatonic music scale and music genre also created by Yared in his listenings to the birds.

In traditional performance, tizita artists recall the memory of a love or time lost, often with several political and social double entendres, rendering the tizita tradition at once of the past and present, emotional and communal, of the individual and the nation.

While Amhara culture has had greater mainstreaming in Ethiopian culture at the federal level (Amharic is the federal working language for example), the working poor of the Amhara attest to memory of times past in the tizita genre.

Woubshet writes, “One definition for Tizita I borrow from Ellison’s distillation of the blues:

> “an impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one’s aching consciousness, to finger its jagged grain, and to transcend it, not by the consolation of philosophy but by squeezing from it a near-tragic, near-comic lyricism.”

And, Tizita derives its life and shape from the insistent, aching memory of lost love. At times, even, having imagined love loss, this sung memory issues a pre-scient melancholy. [21] Have we truly looked at our pain? Have we really heard the lost loves, homes, peoples?

**OROMO MEMORY THEORY: FINNA AS ROUTE TO REMEMBRANCE, FUTURES AND PEACE**

Finna. Finna “represents the legacy of the past which each generation inherits from its forefathers [and foremothers] and which it transforms; it is the fertile patrimony held in trust by the present generation.”

which it will enrich and bequeath to future generations... it describes a movement emanating from the inside, a developing of the inner potential of society based on the cultural roots it has already laid down” (Kassam 1994, 19–40). More so, Finna is at the heart of the country’s capital. Prior to the founding of Addis Ababa in the 1800s, this was FinFinne. Etymologically rooted in “finna” meaning “gift” and “finne” meaning “we brought”, meaning “we brought gifts”. Finna is the working method towards sustainable peace, democracy and ecological harmony in Oromo worldviews.

**SPECULATIVE FUTURES THROUGH ETHIOPIAN LANDSCAPE THEORIES**

Perhaps here we may find, that the generative futures for African Landscape are far beyond the bind of Landscape the discipline as practiced in the West. Starting from the cases of Somali, Amhara and Oromo readings of land, we could begin to see how the polyphonic nature of land connection in Ethiopia has to-date been source of conflict.

How might we begin a process of generating new methods of human-land connection in Ethiopia? This thesis bridges two aspects of Ethiopian landscape - Ethiopians historic embodied engagements with flowers and its shifting relationship with flowers as seen in the cut-flower industry's boom in the country as well as the ongoing growth of the Ethiopian capital.

The thesis illustrates one potential trajectory that builds binary complementarity for the future of Ethiopian Landscape.

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Ye Deji Abeba Negn
Sonic Floral Imaginaries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

“IF ONE WANTS TO UNDERSTAND FLOWERS IN ETHIOPIA, ONE SHOULD LISTEN.”

Companion Sonic Works

NEBER, ALO, ENORALO: TERRA ETERNAL
ADDIS ADEY ABEBA
ROSE
A SPELL AGAINST ETHNIC HATRED
ABEBAYE (REPRISE ETERNAL)