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Postcard from Dadaab: Flight from Famine

Posted by *Elissa Curtis*

The photographer Jehad Nga began working in Somalia five years ago, capturing life as reflected light. Earlier this month, Nga travelled to Dadaab, Kenya, just across the border with Somalia, where hundreds of thousands of Somalis have fled drought and famine to what has been called the world's biggest refugee camp. (Read Alexis Okeowo's post on how to help.)

"Much of the work is suggestive: a mattress slung over a dead tree, the remains of ID photos discarded on the ground, or thousands of wipes of ink from passing fingers on a wall," Nga told me. "I decided to shoot solely using the part of my brain that I don't tend to use when working on deadline, focussing more on what I refer to as the artifacts of the situation as opposed to the situation itself." Working with a medium-format camera that uses large-format lenses, Nga was forced to "slow down, stop, take inventory of everything and then proceed," a technique



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that fit his intentions. “Stillness and still life are a large part of how I process such huge events and stories,” he said. “To me they give a greater relief to what I am feeling and how I am understanding what is going on.” Here is a look at what Nga saw at Dadaab.

