

# Rhythms of Africa

*Piper MacKay – a Wildlife Photographer in Her Own Words*

A woman's passionate love affair with Africa, its wildlife and its cultures is at the origin of an extraordinary collection of animal and human portraits - all equally intense

As a professional cultural and wildlife photographer, I'm driven by my passion to document the beauty of our fragile planet in hope to protect wildlife and cultures living on the edge of extinction. My work is heavily concentrated on the African Continent and I've spent much time in Eastern Africa over the past six years documenting both the people and the wildlife.

As many photographers before me, I came to this craft by chance. I had been plugging along in a fashion career in design and textiles for the past 20 years when I took that once-in-a-lifetime trip to Africa, a land I fell in love with the minute my feet touched down on its rich red soil and a trip that changed the trajectory of my career and life. I returned to Africa two more times in the first six months after that first trip. Although this new path has been filled with extreme challenges, when you find a passion that fills your soul and gives you a strong purpose to what you believe is right, the rewards of doing what you love outweigh the sacrifices. I believe the more compelling work comes when you invest time, living the stories you are trying to tell even when that means living in harsh conditions. It is important to interact and gain the trust of those whose stories you are telling, especially when sensitive



and complicated. The world has enough images of poverty, pain and disaster, much more needful is imagery that reveals the beauty of nature and those living in harmony with the Earth. Powerful images help shape the view of the world and play an important role in disseminating how cultures and wildlife are coping with the rapid changes happening in the developing world. My passion for the natural world has grown into a lifelong commitment to inspire others to explore, respect and preserve the beauty of our fragile planet. I believe great change is made by one person who is emotionally touched by a personal experience and persons act with passion when they are emotionally and physically involved.

I am now leading tours in Eastern Africa to create a heightened understanding of the issues faced by wildlife and cultures in this region. My work has been displayed at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum, The Museum of History and Industry and The Art Wolfe Gallery, as well as local galleries. It has been featured in nature, photography, and travel publications through representation of several photo agencies, including *Nature Photographer*, *Rangefinder*, *Nature's Best*, *Birders* and the World Wildlife Fund.

[www.pipermackayphotography.com](http://www.pipermackayphotography.com)





**Mursi children playing in the river,**  
Omo Valley, Southern Ethiopia.  
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/1250, f 5,6, ISO 400, 19mm





1



2

**Portrait of a Mursi girl**, Omo Valley, Southern Ethiopia.  
Canon EOS 7D, 1/640, f 2,8, ISO 100, 135mm (1)

**Portrait of White Rhino**, Lake Nakuru, Kenya.  
Canon EOS-1D Mark II, 1/800, f 7, ISO 1000, 500mm (2)

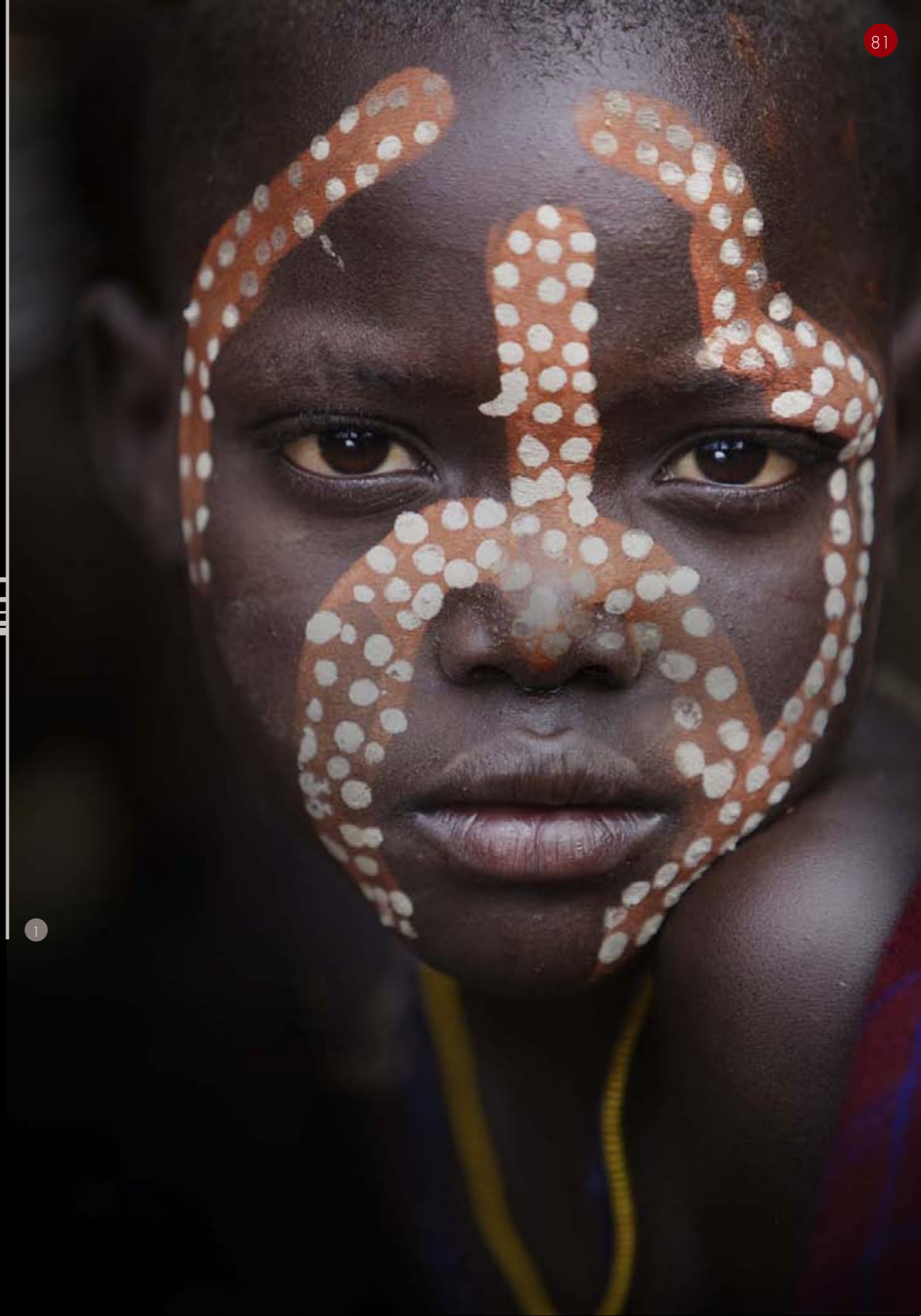




2

**Portrait of a beautiful Mursi girl,**  
Omo Valley,  
Ethiopia.  
Canon EOS  
5D Mark II,  
1/200, f 2,8,  
ISO 200,  
200mm  
(1)

**Portrait of a male lion**  
walking right  
towards me in  
the Masai  
Mara, Kenya.  
Canon EOS-  
1D Mark III,  
1/2500, f 8,  
ISO 2000.  
700mm  
(2)



1



**Portrait of  
Mursi  
Children,**

Omo Valley,  
Southern  
Ethiopia.

Canon EOS  
5D Mark II,  
1/800, f 4,  
ISO 320,  
200mm







2



1

**Portrait of an elder Mursi woman**, Omo Valley, Southern Ethiopia.  
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/1250, f 2,8, ISO 400, 185mm (1)

**Portrait of a Mursi warrior**, Omo Valley, Southern Ethiopia.  
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/1000, f 4, ISO 200, 200mm (2)





1

**Peek-a-boo!** A baby baboon that was playing with me for about a half hour in Lake Nakuru, Kenya.  
Canon EOS-1D Mark II, 1/400, f 5,6, ISO 200, 500mm  
(1)

**Waterbuck** on the Masai Mara plains, Kenya.  
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/640, f 10, ISO 500, 700mm  
(2)



2





**The Kara Tribe**  
sitting along the Omo River having morning coffee, Ethiopia.  
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/400, f 2,8, ISO 200, 115mm





**Herd of Elephants**  
crossing the plains in Amboseli, Kenya.  
Canon EOS-1D Mark III, 1/1250, f 10, ISO 500, 110mm



**Wildebeest**  
migrating through the plains of the Masai Mara at sunset, Kenya.  
Canon EOS-1D Mark II, 1/1600, f 11, ISO 1250, 70mm





**Beautiful colorful beaded skins**  
worn by the Hamar women, Omo Valley,  
Southern Ethiopia. Canon EOS 5D Mark  
II, 1/8000, f 2,8, ISO 1600, 120mm

**Portrait of two beautiful Mursi**  
girls along the river, Omo Valley, Ethiopia.  
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/640, f 4, ISO 200, 120mm



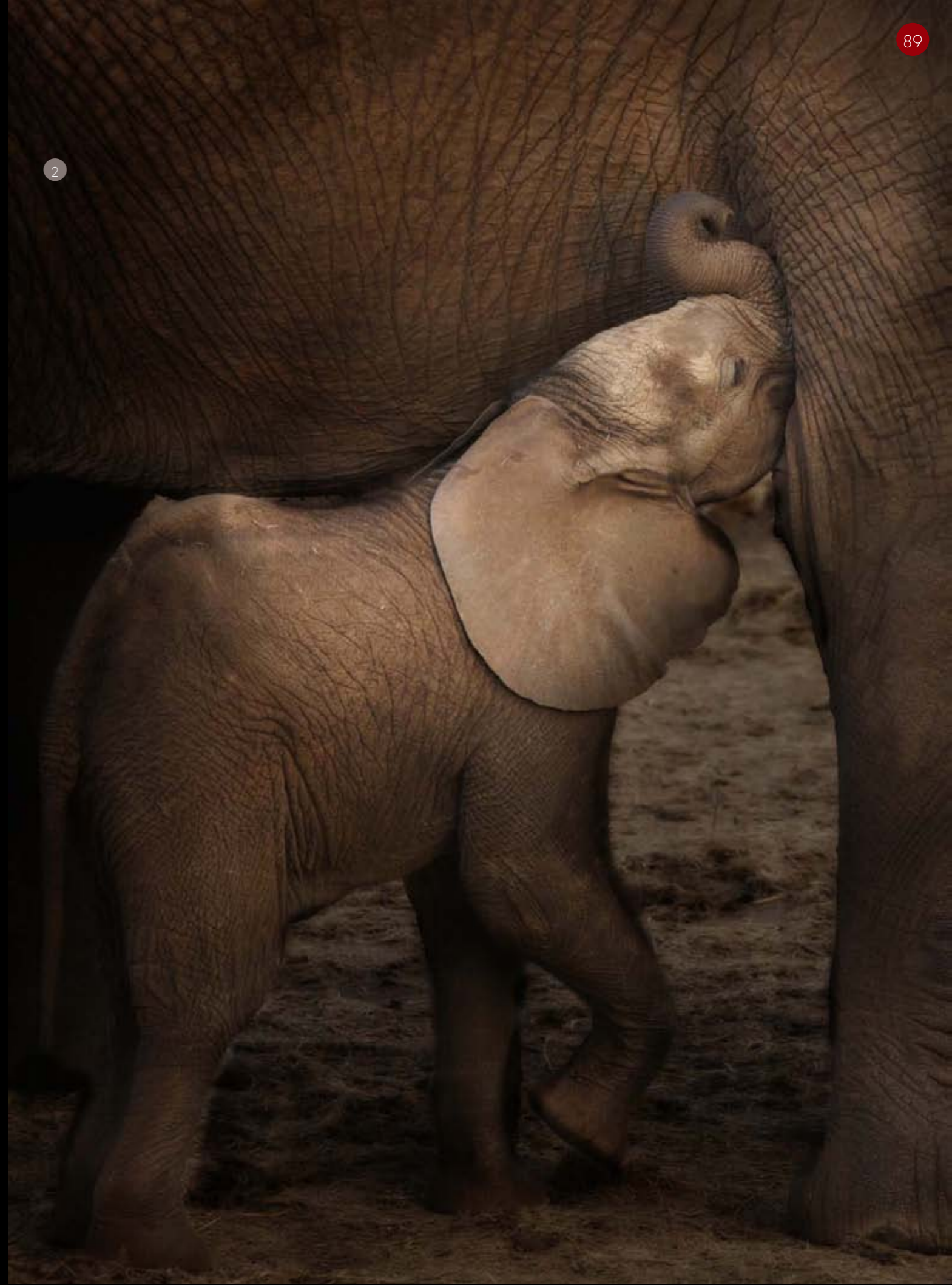


**Portrait of a Kara girl**  
drinking from the Omo River, Omo Valley, Ethiopia.  
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/500, f 4,9, ISO 200, 170mm





1



2

**Portrait of a Kara woman with child**, Omo Valley, Southern Ethiopia.  
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/320, f 13, ISO 200, 35mm (1)

**Young elephant trying to nurse**, salt lick, Eastern Kenya.  
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/250, f 6,3, ISO 1000, 500mm (2)



**Miracle in the Mara**, six cheetah cubs in the Masai Mara, Kenya. A rare opportunity as most cheetahs have between 3-4 cubs and mortality rate is as high as 95%. Canon EOS-1D Mark III, 1/2500, f 13, ISO 2000, 700mm



**This cheetah** had already lost all of her cubs but this one and was going to great lengths to protect it. This image was part of the Nature's Best exhibit at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum. Masai Mara, Kenya. Canon EOS-1D Mark II, 1/1600, f 7,1, ISO 100, 500mm





**Portrait of an elephant**

swimming across the Zambezi river in Botswana.  
Canon EOS 20D, 1/250, f 8, ISO 800, 255mm





**Mischief in the the plains,**  
two cheetah cubs at play  
in the Masai Mara, Kenya.  
Canon EOS-1D Mark III, 1/1250,  
f 8, ISO 2000, 500mm



**Gerenuk** can stretch up to 6 feet  
to reach foliage. Samburu, Kenya.  
Canon EOS-1D Mark II,  
1/1250, f 5,6,  
ISO 160, 500mm





1

**The most beautiful**  
full maned male lions are  
found in the Masai Mara,  
Kenya. Canon EOS 20D,  
1/1000, f 4, ISO 200,  
500mm  
(1)

**Portrait of a Mursi**  
**woman** who wears orna-  
mental clay lip plates, elabo-  
rate headdresses and beauti-  
ful body paint, Omo Valley,  
Ethiopia. Canon EOS 5D  
Mark II, 1/1250, f 2,8, ISO  
200, 200mm  
(2)



93

2





**This cheetah cub** is trying to get a free ride, Masai Mara, Kenya.  
Canon EOS-1D Mark III, 1/2000, f 13, ISO 2000, 700mm





1

**Being scolded by a male baboon**, Lake Nakuru, Kenya.  
Canon EOS-1D Mark II, 1/160, f 4, ISO 500, 500mm (1)

**Portrait of a Silverback Mountain Gorilla**, Virunga hills, Rwanda.  
Canon EOS-1D Mark II, 1/100, f 2,8, ISO 1250, 105mm (2)



2





**Portrait of a Mursi woman** hiding a fresh cut in her lip with a leaf. At a young age a girls lower lip is cut by her mother and is held open by a wooden plug until the wound heals and a lip plate is inserted. Omo Valley, Southern Ethiopia. Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/400, f 2,8, ISO 200, 165mm (1)

**Portrait of a beautiful Mursi girl,** Omo Valley, Ethiopia. Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/160, f 5,6, ISO 320, 200mm (2)





**Portrait of the Kara warriors** sitting along the banks of the Omo River, Ethiopia. The Kara excel in face and body painting that is practiced daily in preparation of their dances and ceremonies. They pulverize locally found white chalk, yellow mineral rock, red iron ore and black charcoal to decorate their bodies often mimicking the spotted plumage of a guinea fowl. The men create highly decorated clay hair buns, which can take up to three days to complete. Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/800, f 5, ISO 200, 200mm (1)

**Portrait of Plains Zebra**, Masai Mara, Kenya. Canon EOS-1D Mark III, 1/200, f 10, ISO 320, 500mm (2)





**Hamer tribe,**  
Omo Valley, Southern Ethiopia.  
Canon EOS 7D, 1/400, f 20,  
ISO 1600, 16mm