



A PASSION FOR ART LEADS TO THE SKIES

Paola Viesi, a photographer based in Rome, always wanted to pursue her love of the arts. She yearned to travel to Ethiopia as well because of the books about that country she read when she was a child. Although Paola had wanted to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Italy, her father insisted she first become independent and then she could cultivate her "artistic feelings."

After 25 years in various Human Resources roles at three companies, she decided it was time to pursue her two great passions – travelling and photography and to succeed in what she referred to as her "second life". In 2002 she took her cameras and travelled to Africa for the first time – to Ethiopia – the same country that had held such fascination to her as a child. "I like change. I wanted to go to Africa after working so long for a company. To me, Africa is the 'basic' – not high-tech which is where I had worked for so long. Africa is Picasso. It is modern art. It is where so much has come from."

"If you work in high-technology, you work a lot with your brain. And now I am exploring the physical relationship," Paola said. She returned to Ethiopia three times in 2003 and twice more both in 2004 and 2005. Those visits kept her in Ethiopia longer than in Rome. She began to explore the country and take photos of the people who are the primary subjects of her work. "I don't work with a tripod. Often what I use is a big lens so in a marketplace, I can be shooting and they don't know their photo is being taken. The people are not always strikingly beautiful, but

they can have a face you will always remember. It becomes an obsession with me – you have to wait for the correct moment."

Paola is not only interested in photographing the people, monuments and ceremonies of Ethiopia, but in promoting the country as well. She has been repeatedly in contact with the Minister of Culture and was also involved in a project for UNESCO.

Then a chance referral to her website brought Paola even closer to her dream of promoting not only the country, but the airline's newest aircraft for delivery in 2008 – the B787 Dreamliner.

Paola's website was passed on to Patty Roberts, Regional Director of Airline Marketing Services at Boeing Commercial Airplanes, who was overwhelmed by the beauty of her photography. What brought Paola to Africa and to Ethiopia in the first place – the "basic nature" – had been captured so gracefully in her photography.

"Paola's photos were so beautiful in their simplicity, and the vibrant colours and gorgeous faces of the people of Ethiopia made them stand out. We were immediately interested in somehow blending her photography into a new campaign we were working on with Ethiopian

Airlines that was targeted at showcasing the B787 and the country. Ethiopians are proud of their country and we wanted to integrate that pride into the campaign," Roberts said.

Ethiopian Airlines agreed to the proposed concepts that were designed by Don Thoreby, Art Director and Graphic Designer at Boeing. "The airline has been very proactive in promoting the B787

Dreamliner once it was announced that they were ordering 10 of the revolutionary aircraft. The B787 Dreamliner will bring unparalleled comfort and passenger benefits never seen before on any commercial aircraft, and Ethiopian Airlines will be the first airline in Africa to fly it," Roberts said.

While Paola knows about Boeing, she did not know much about the B787 Dreamliner. As a passenger, however, she is keenly aware of how critical it is that airlines try and bring back the romance and magic of flight.

"I was so fascinated with flying when I was younger. Something that is more relaxed is needed. You dream with all your senses – your nose, ears, eyes. I look forward to flying on Ethiopian's B787 Dreamliner," Paola said.

The billboard featuring Ethiopian Airline's B787 Dreamliner and the captivating photography of Paola Viesi, was recently erected near Bole International Airport and Ethiopian Airlines' headquarters.

For the little girl who dreamed of one day going to Ethiopia, Paola Viesi has become more than a visitor to this culturally rich landscape and its welcoming people. She has come back to her roots.

"I see Ethiopia as a real tapestry, and an unfinished piece of art. I am very, very happy. Now I have a clear look at my future and I have no regrets," Paola said.

To discover the beauty of Ethiopia as seen through the lens of Paola Viesi, explore her website at www.paolaviesi.com or www.paolaviesi.eu

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