

Namibia & South Africa Vic Falls to Cape Town 2010

by Bill and Gail Lockington



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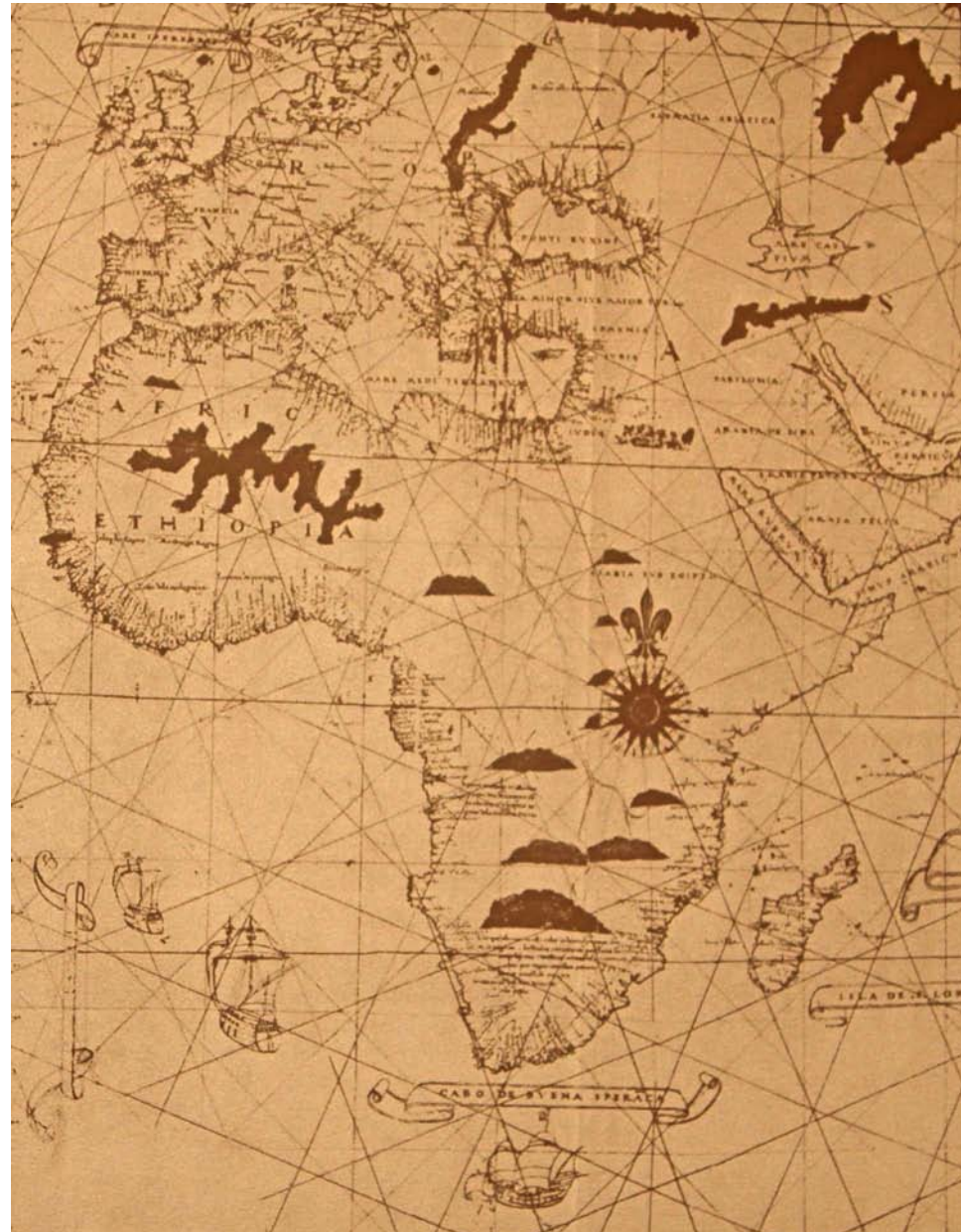


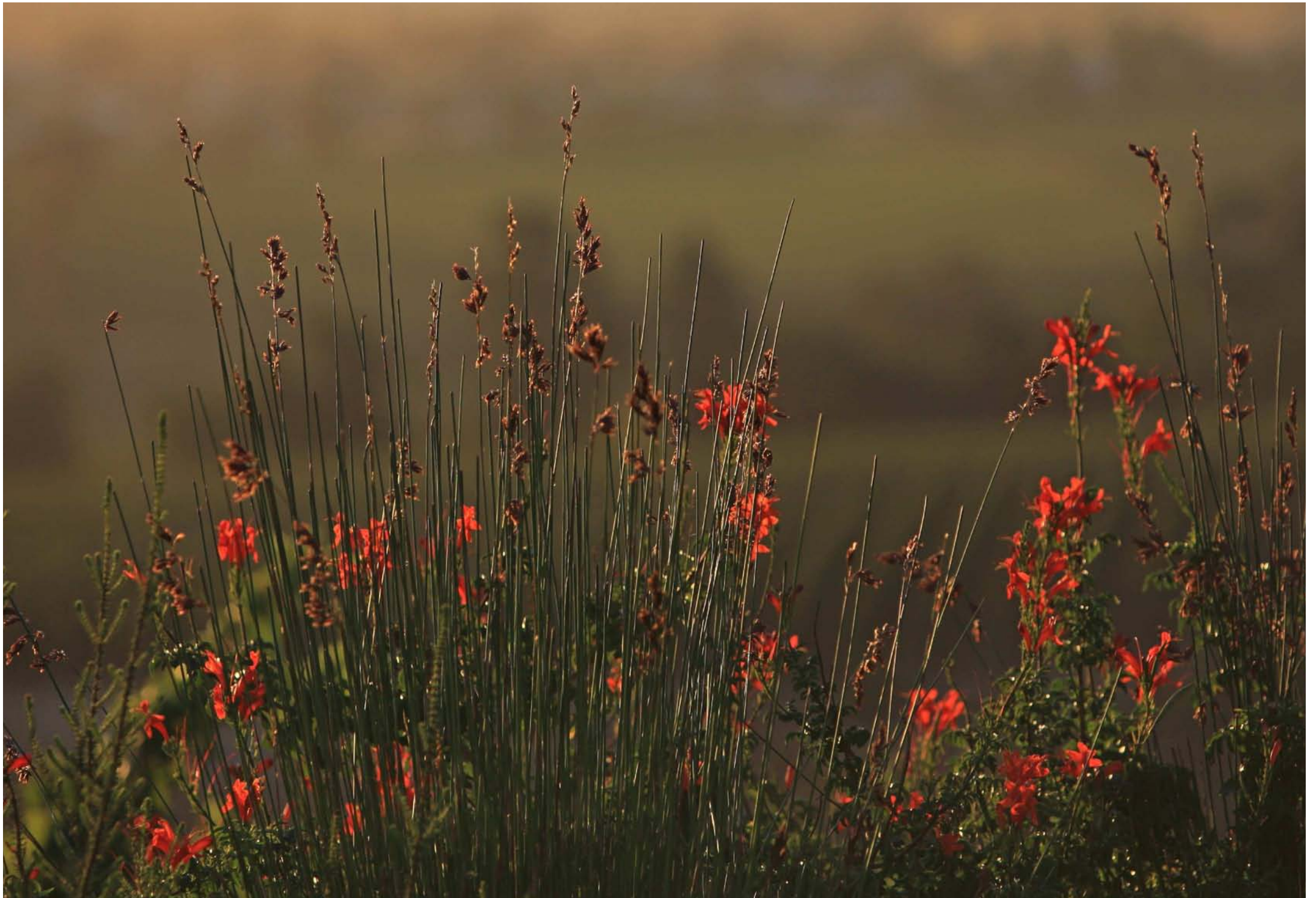
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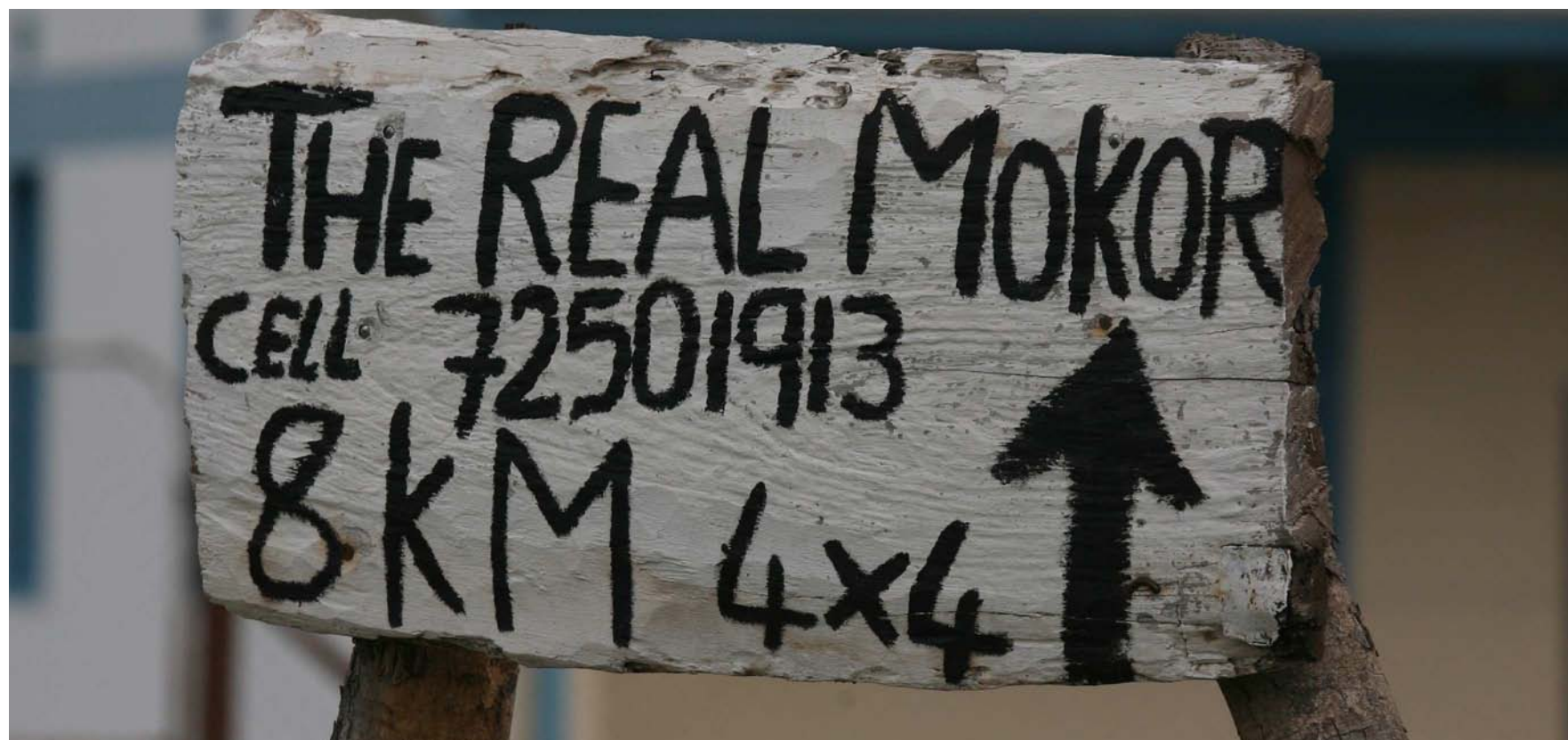


Namibia & South Africa

This book reflects our memories and images from the second part of a seven week trip taken to Africa in January/February and March 2010. Penny Rush, Ken Powell, Gail and I flew to Nairobi where we started the trip. This book records the last four weeks, covering part of Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. We travelled over 11,000 kilometres in just about every type of conveyance you could imagine. Namibia was a very special surprise for all of us. We had seen pictures (from Freeman Patterson's photography) but this country is full of surprises. Our day in the "dunes" is one we will never forget - 55 degrees celsius at high noon; climbing Dune 45 - all once in a lifetime experiences. The beauty of photography continues to influence me. Without the visuals of my pictures, even as I read my journal, the meaning and experience fades. The images bring it all back - a legacy trip. We hope this book, in some small way, will be representative of what we saw, the people we met and our obvious enjoyment.





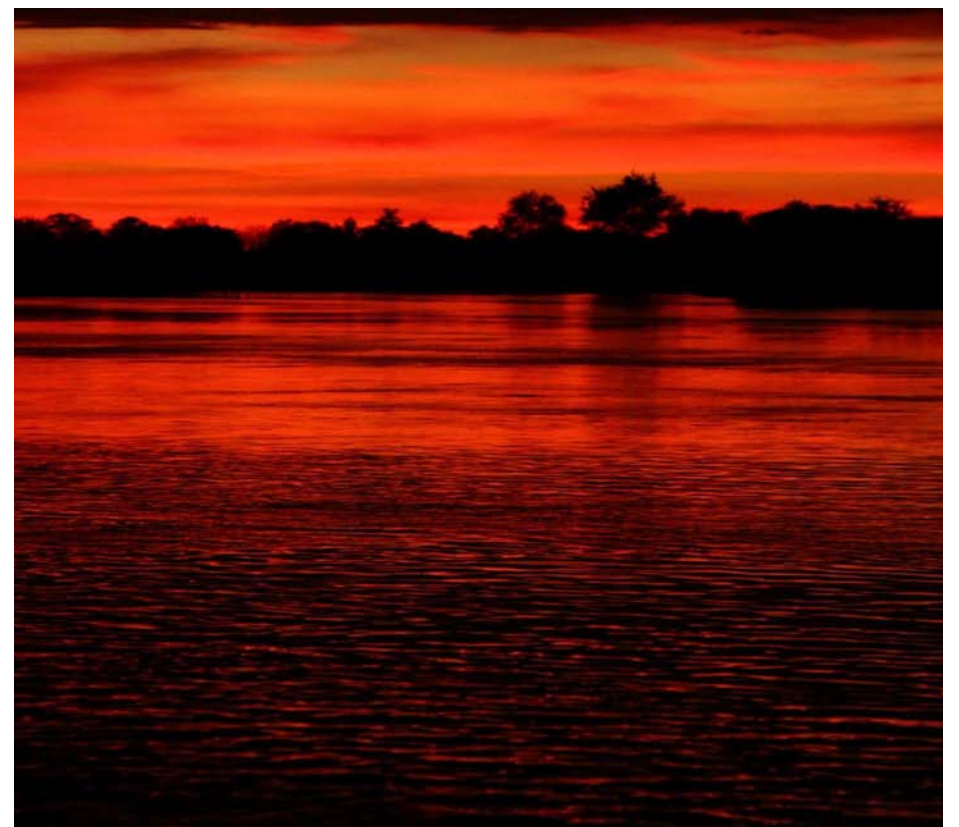
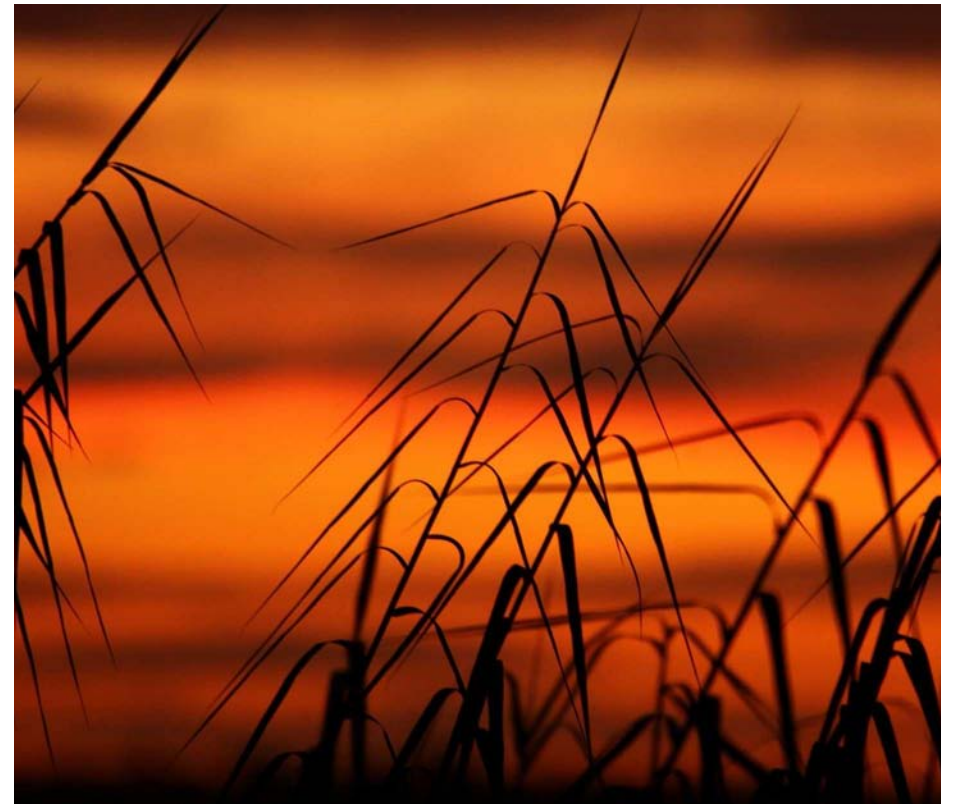
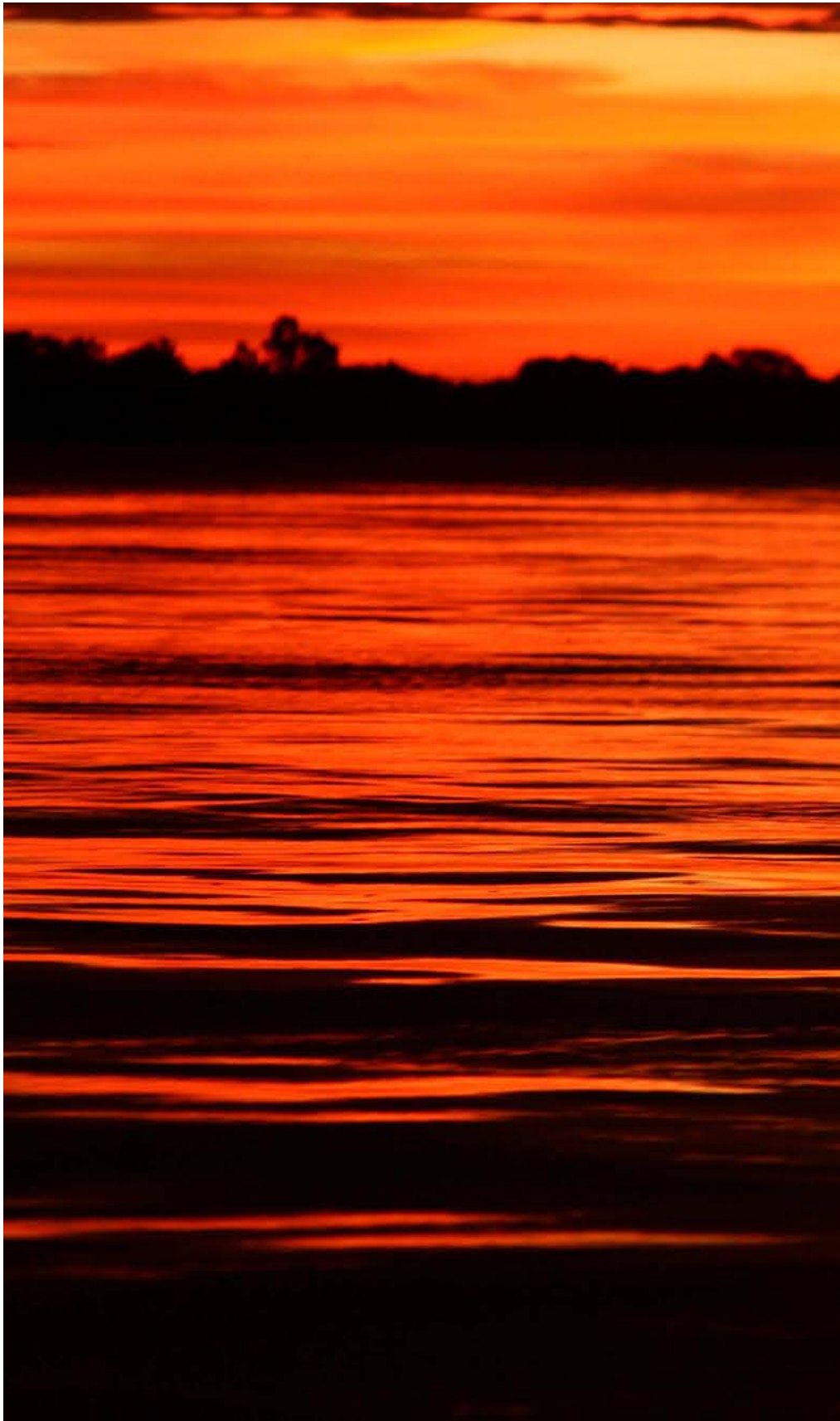


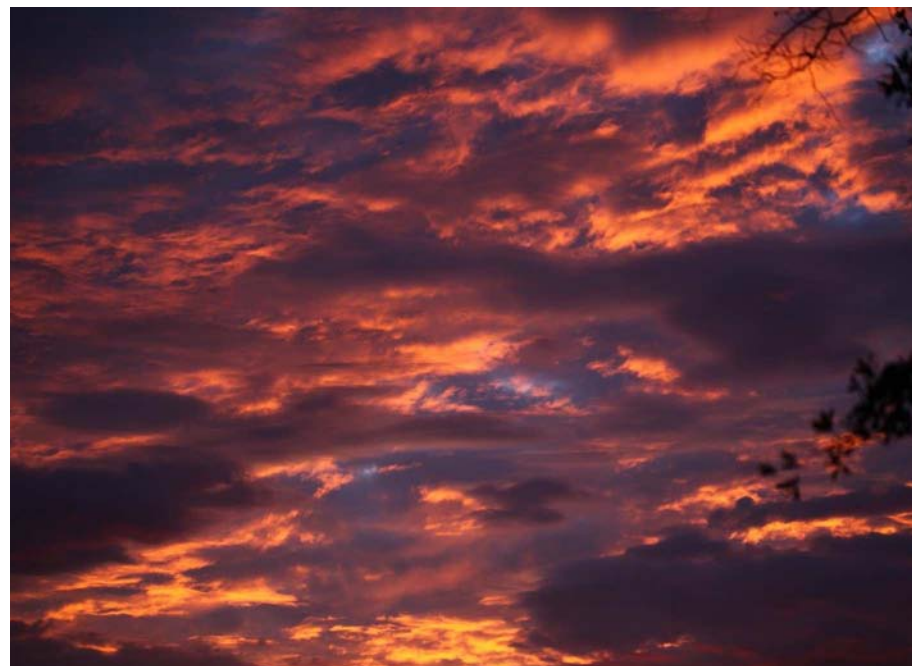


We left Guma Camp in Botswana and entered Namibia (Ken doing the two - step passport between countries.) Passing through Rundu, we were soon at NKWAZI Lodge and Camping. The Octavango River had flooded and we were transported by boat to our camp. A wonderful evening cruise with the most brilliant sunrise I have ever seen, a visit to the local school, and an evening concert from local dancers made for a very full agenda over two days. The children are wonderful, enthusiastic and welcoming. They followed us everywhere, enjoying the pictures of themselves from our cameras and wanting to show us their art work. Leaving the Camp, we entered Etosha National Park. Over the seven weeks of our trip, we were in eleven game parks. Although the Serengeti is magnificent, my favourite was Etosha. The variety of wildlife and access from our Toyota was exceptional and many of our favourite images were shot in this park.













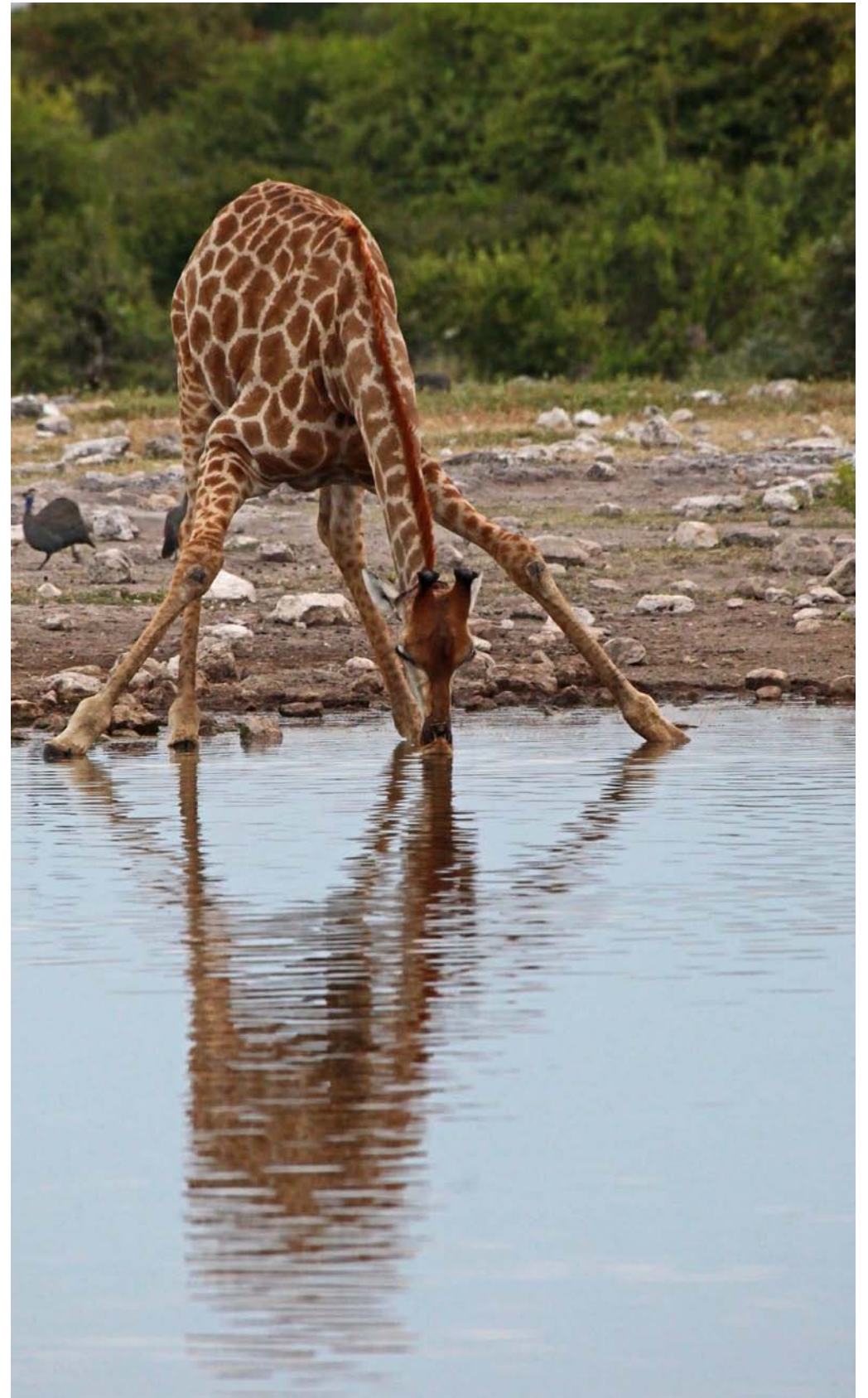
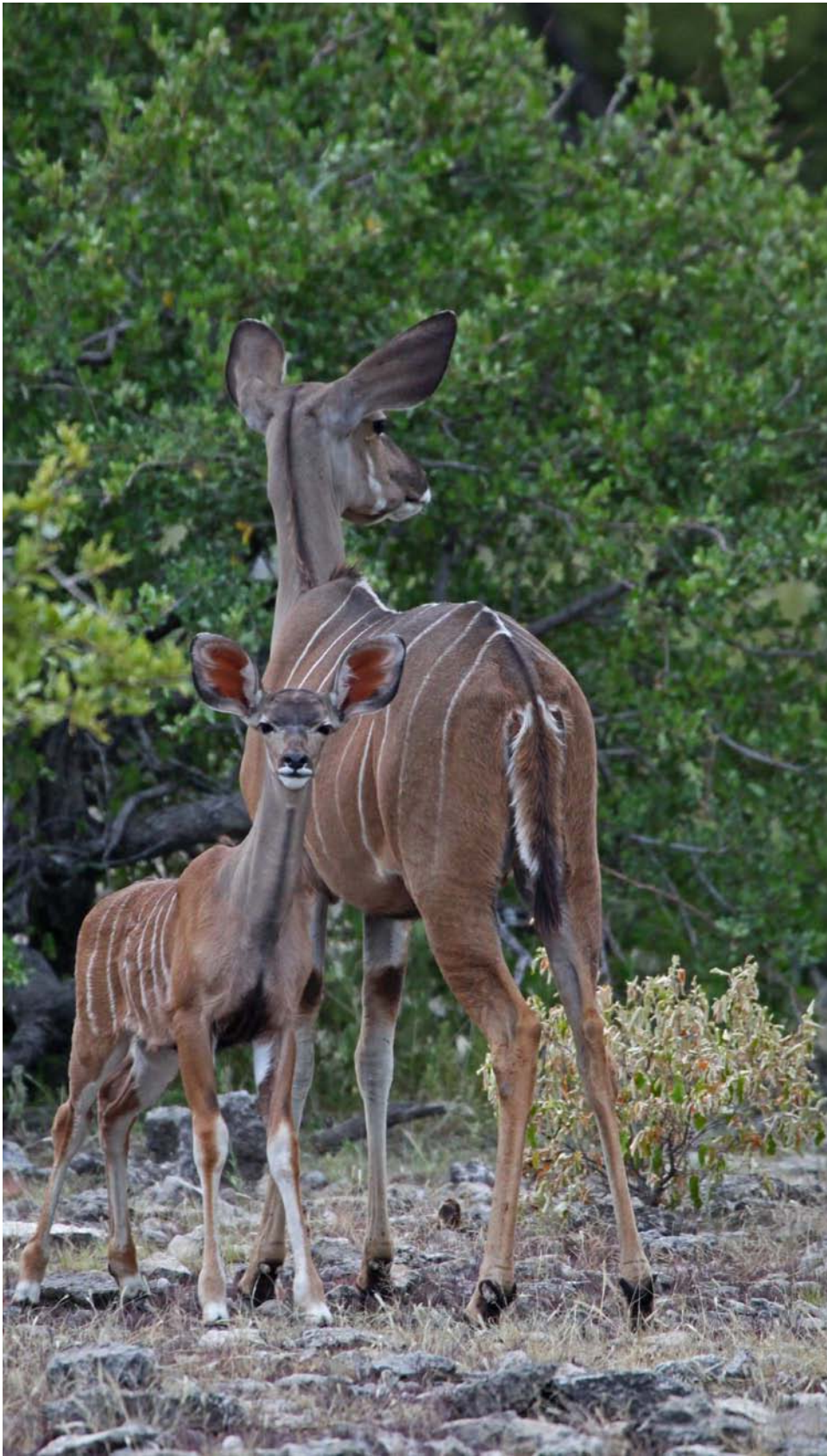






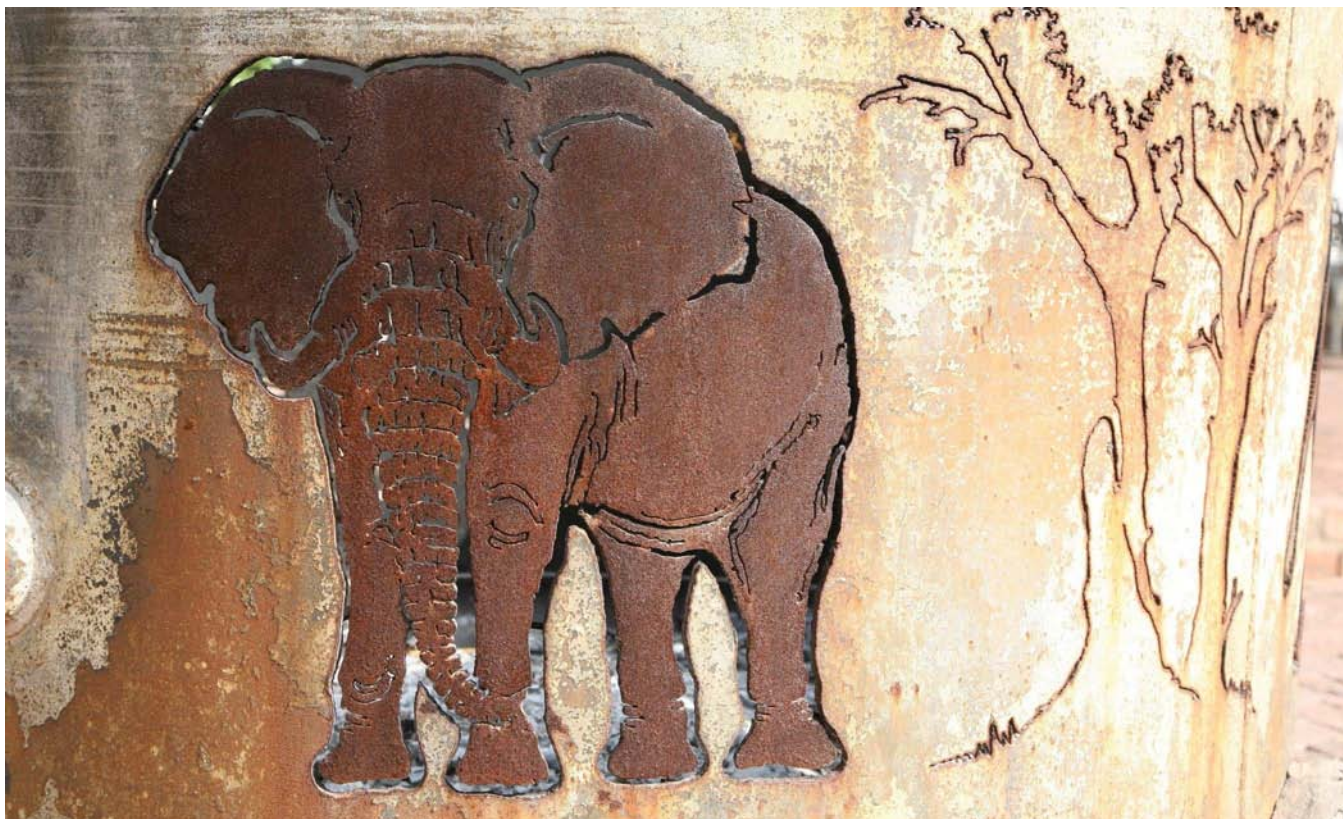














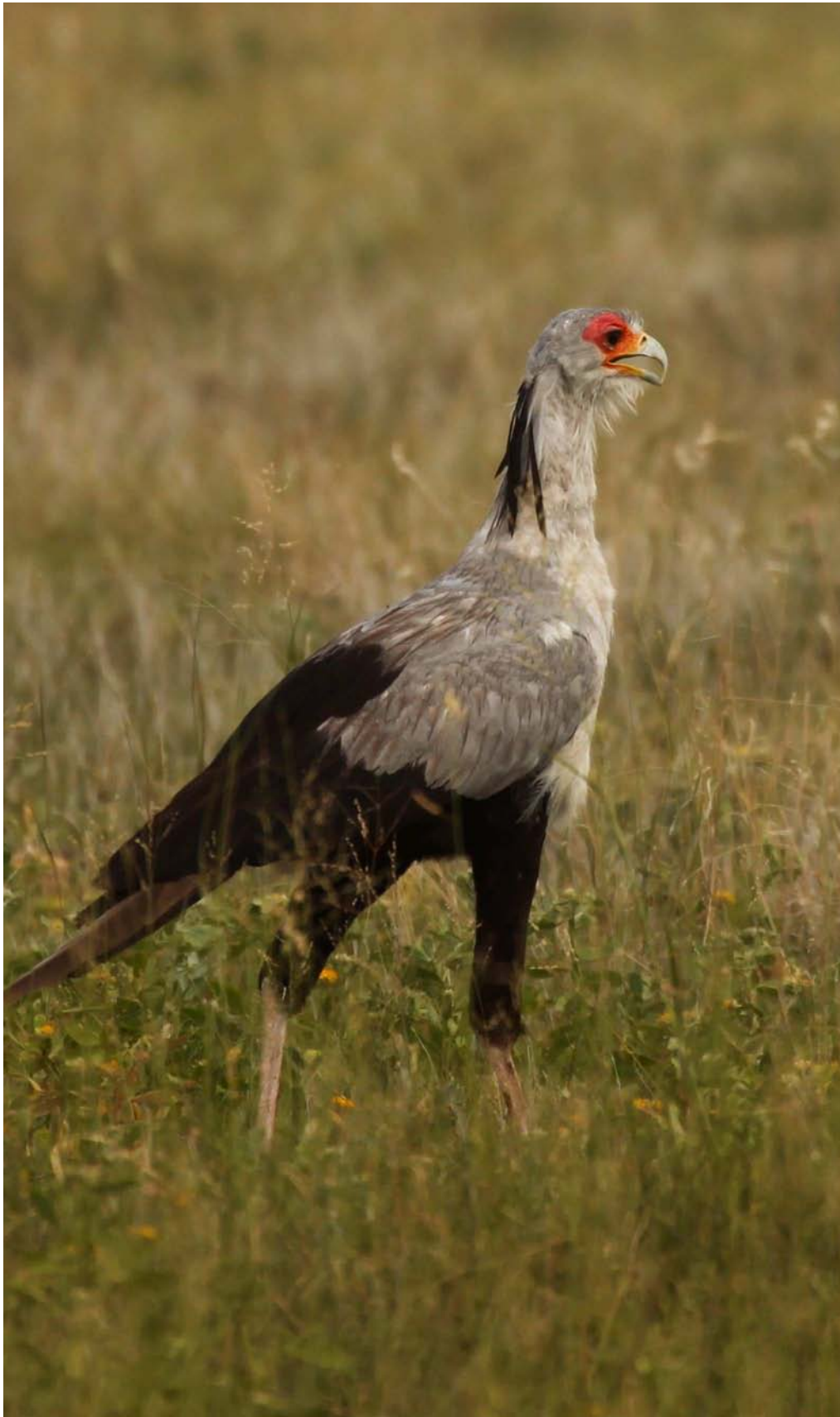


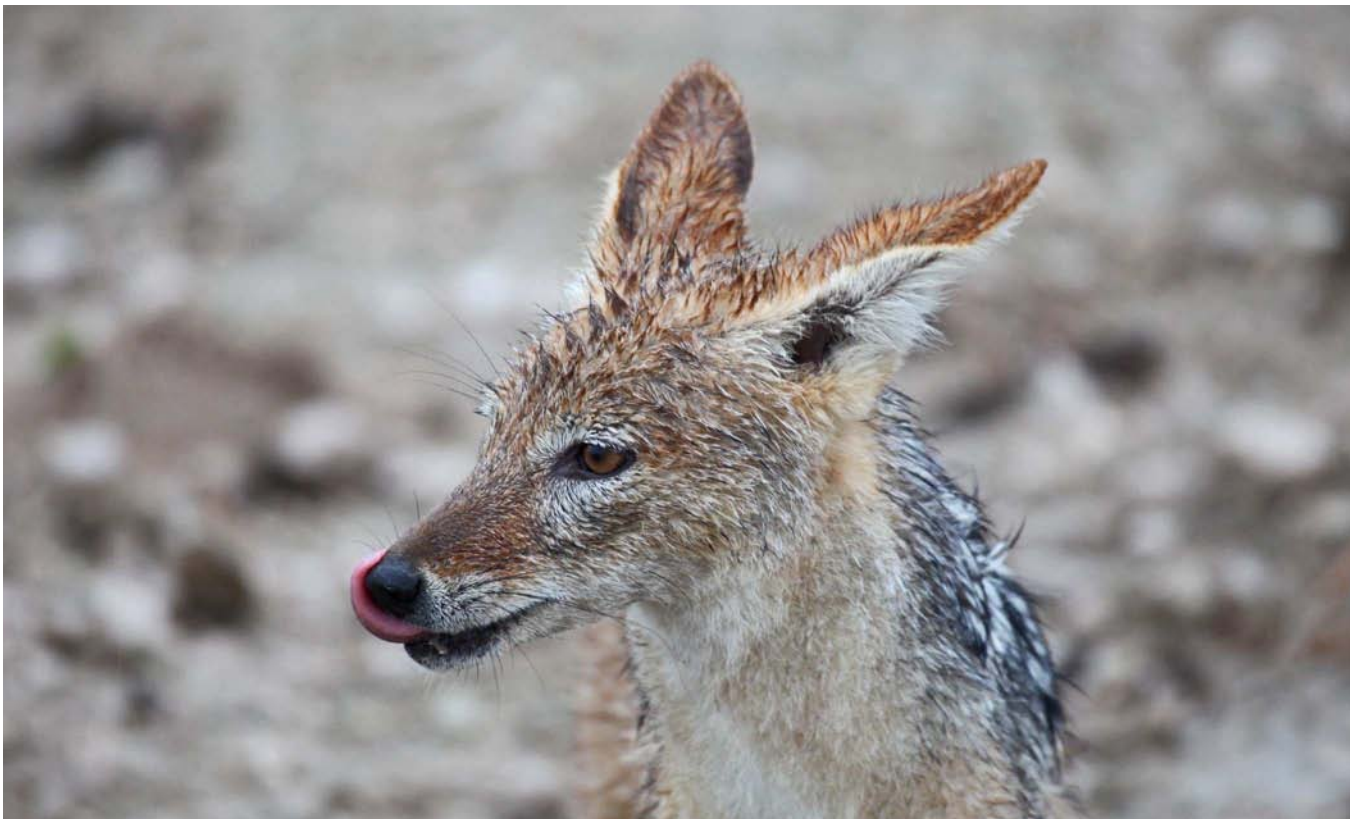






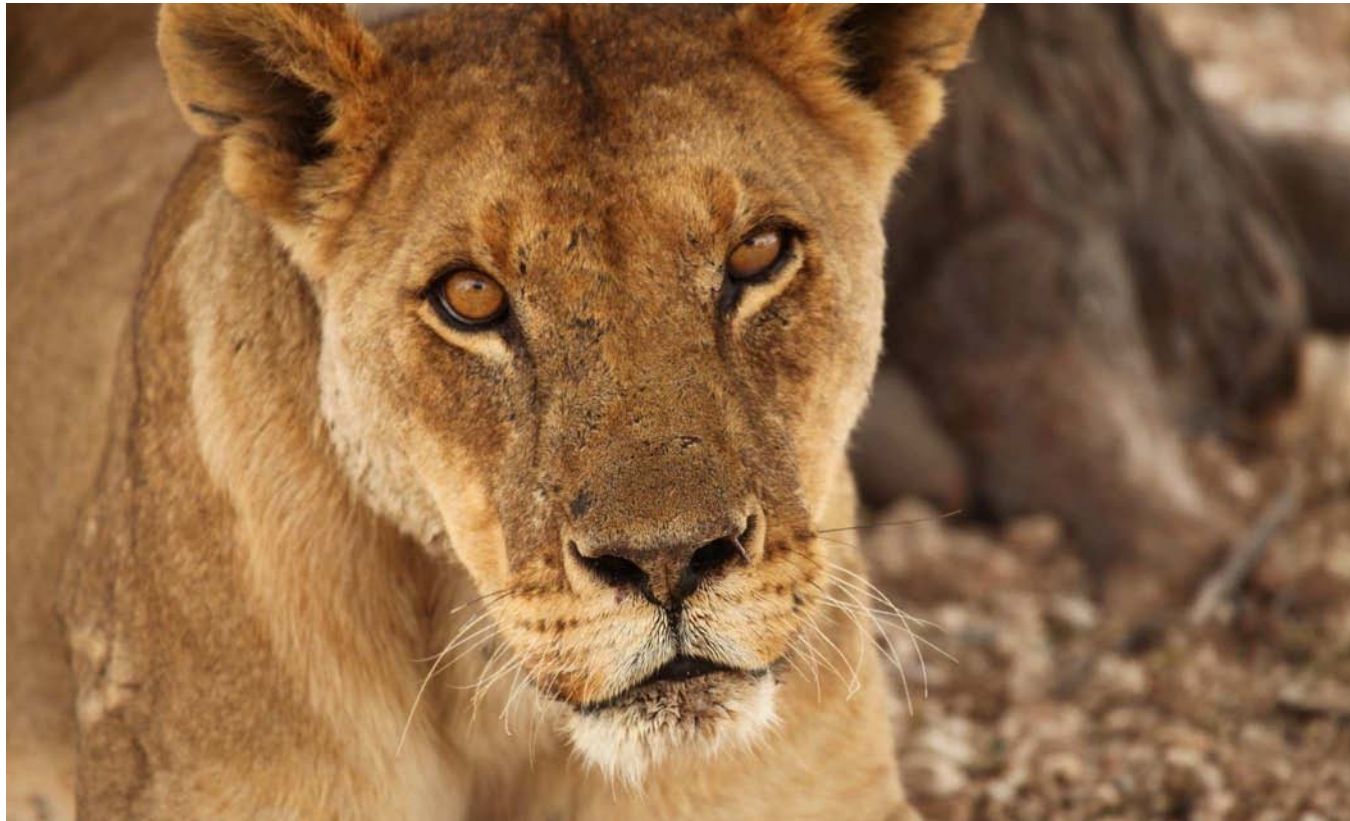




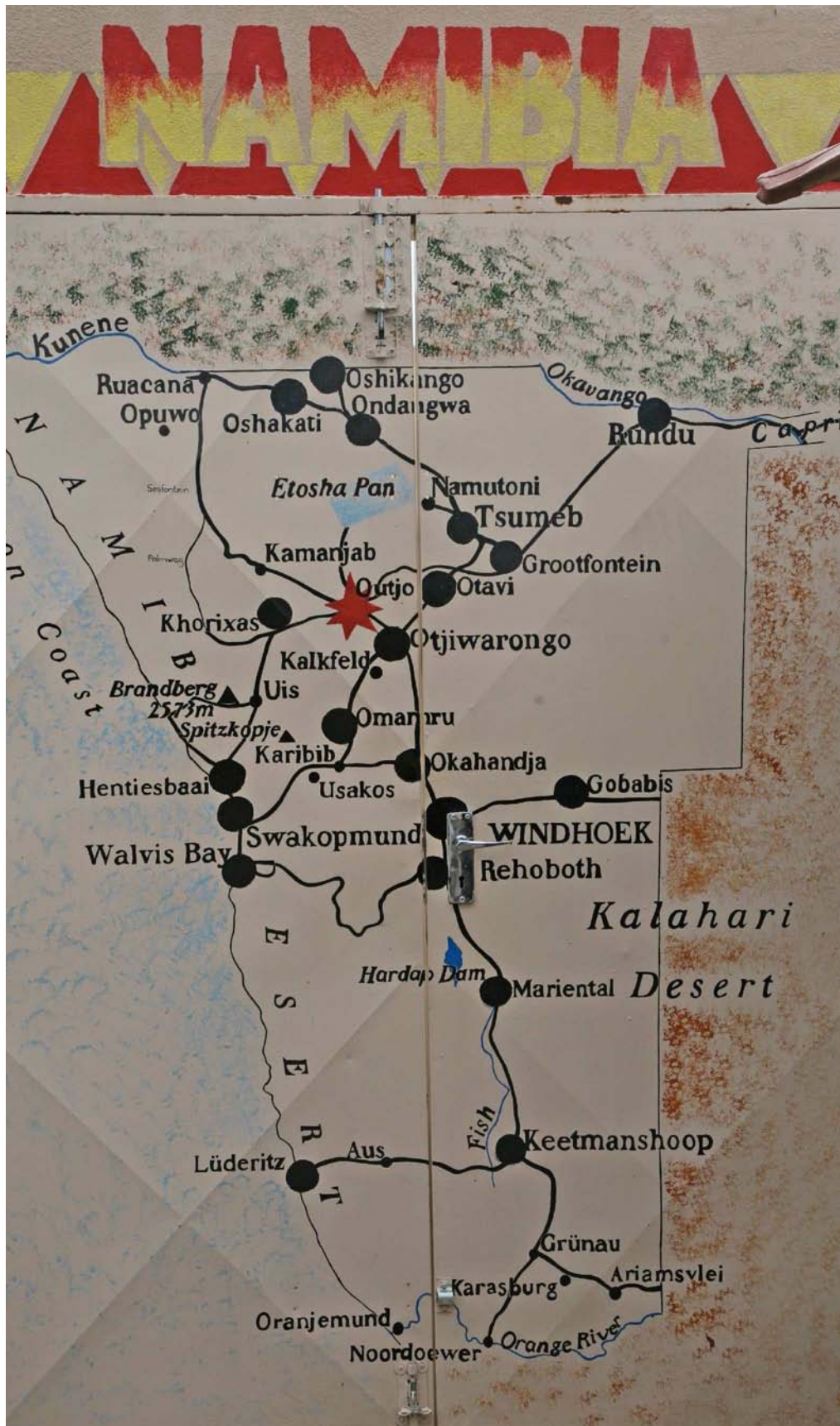


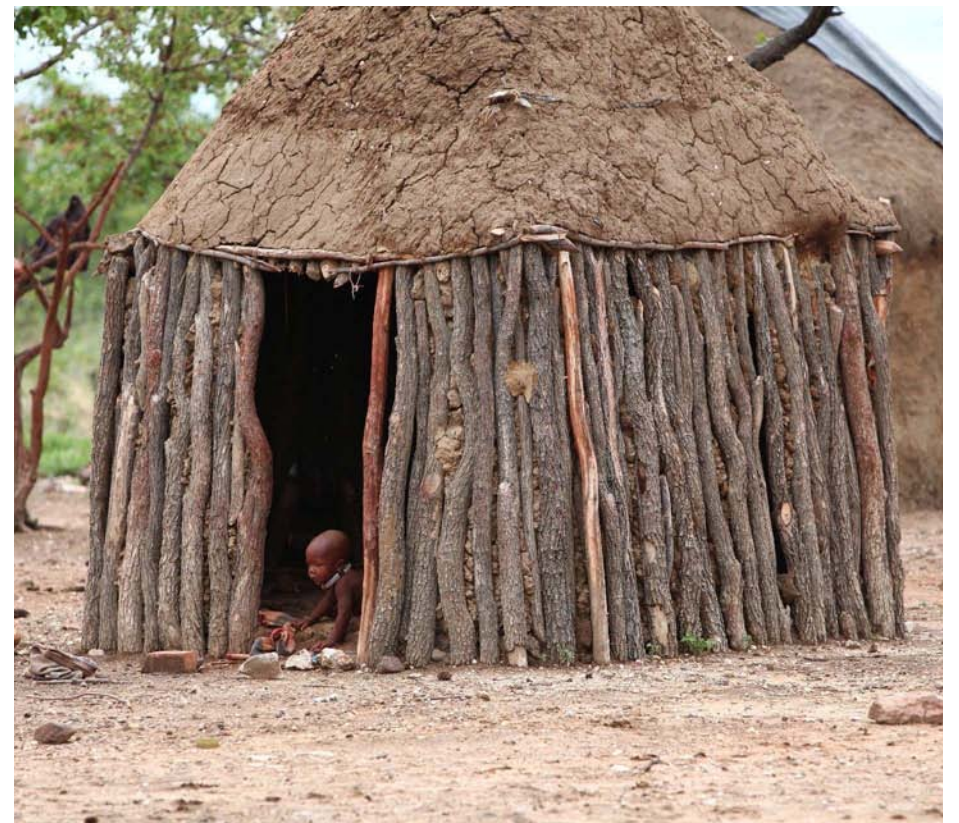




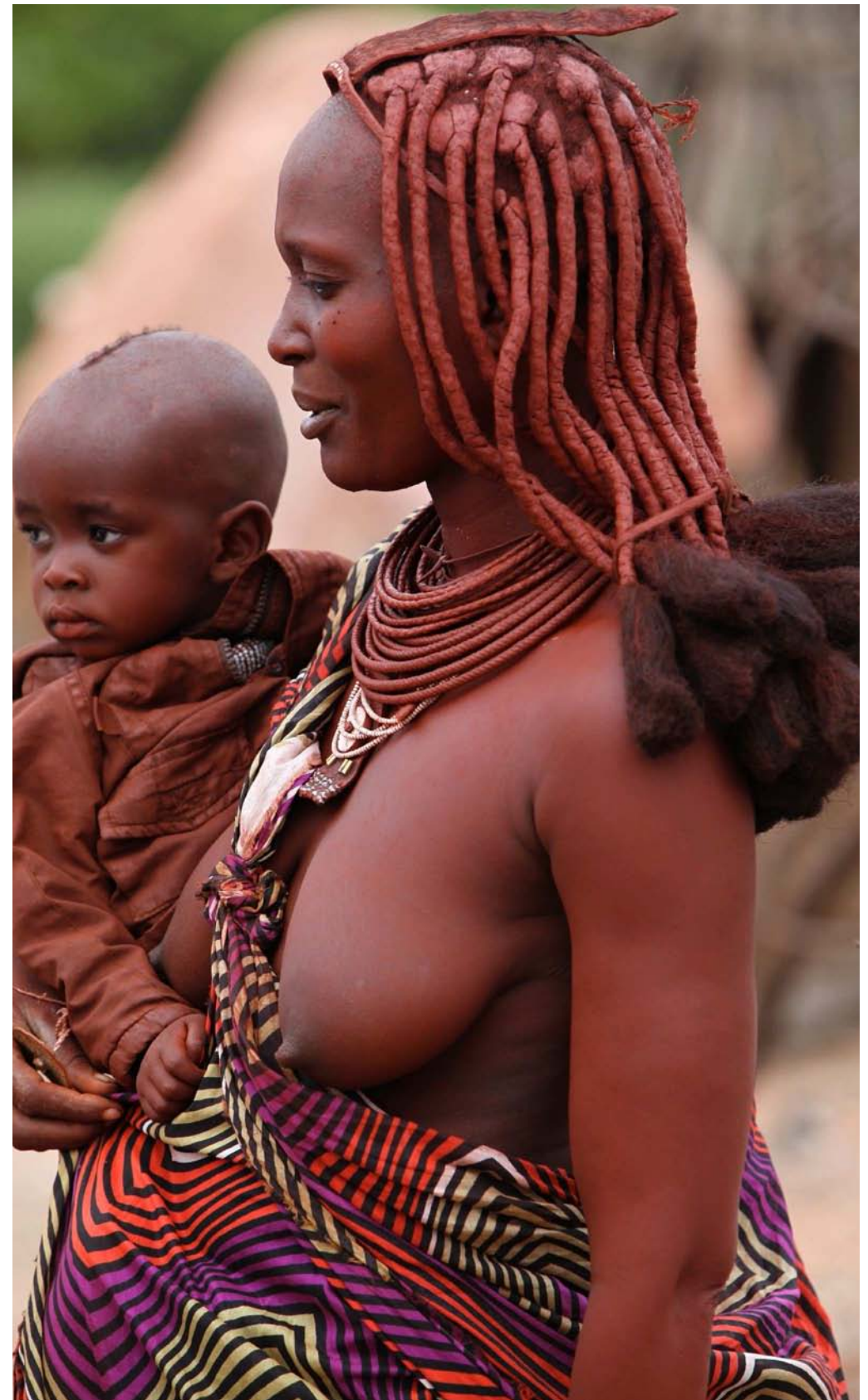


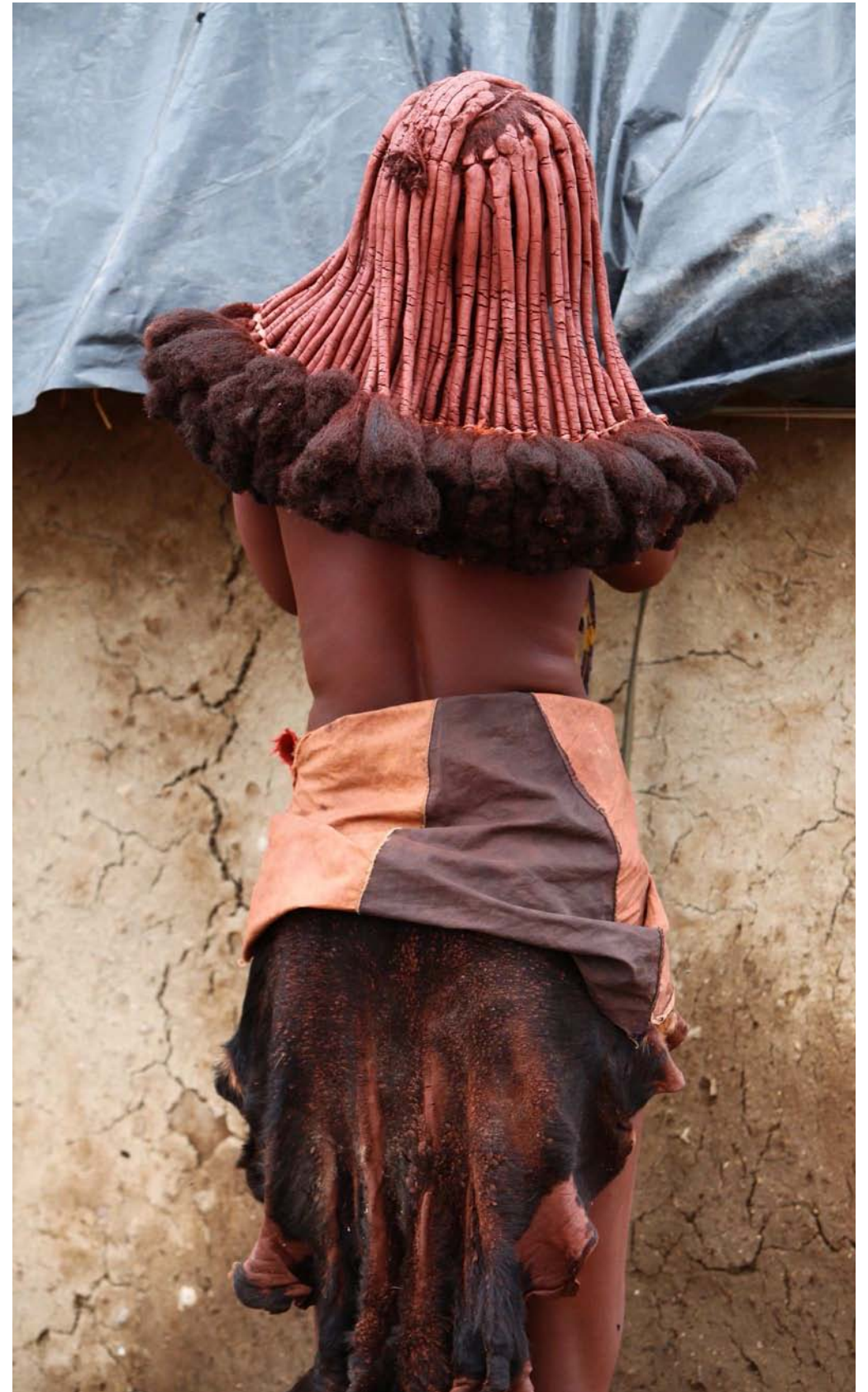


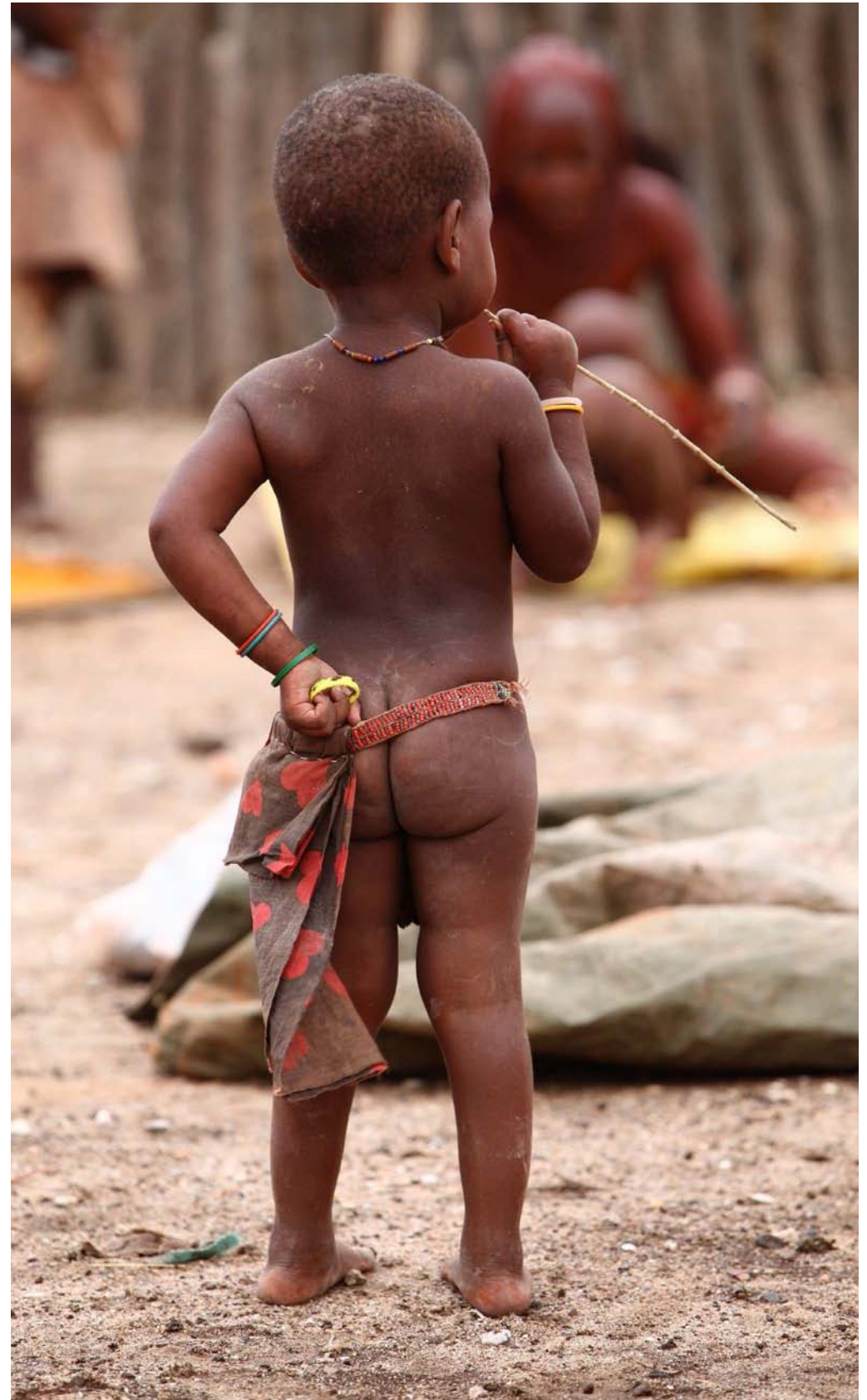


















Although most rock art shows recognizable animal species, important clues show that it is not simply a record of the natural world. All subjects were chosen for their ritual significance. Some artwork combines human and animal traits in the same subject. Details visible in the art refer specifically to the experience of ritual trance.

TRAIN YOUR EYES

See like the artist



Tell-tale tail

The rock art shows the moment of transformation from human to spirit animal through some of the signs of imminent death. Most common is the raised tail, shown in almost all the engraved antelope. The upright mane of the zebra represents the raised neck hair immediately before death. In these engravings, it is not the animal that is dying: it is the shaman in a death-like state as he is transformed into the animal.



Dancing birds

Birds are prominent among the Twyfelfontein engravings, but do not include short-legged species that perch or hop. All the birds shown are species that walk or stride, such as ostriches. The birds are often shown in a line, walking or dancing like people in the typical 'arms back' posture of ritual dance. Such images represent people transformed into birds.



A walk on the wild side

This oryx was engraved next to a tunnel in the rock, a possible entry point to the supernatural world. Next to the oryx, its front and back hoof prints are shown paired with human footprints. The print of the rear hoof and the corresponding foot are shown deeply impressed as if a dancing human became, at that very moment, an oryx standing on its hind legs.



Four, five, man alive ...

The 'Lion Man' engraving shows five toes on each paw, whereas in real life, a lion only has four toes. The deliberate combination of human and animal features shows that this is a shaman who has transformed into a lion.

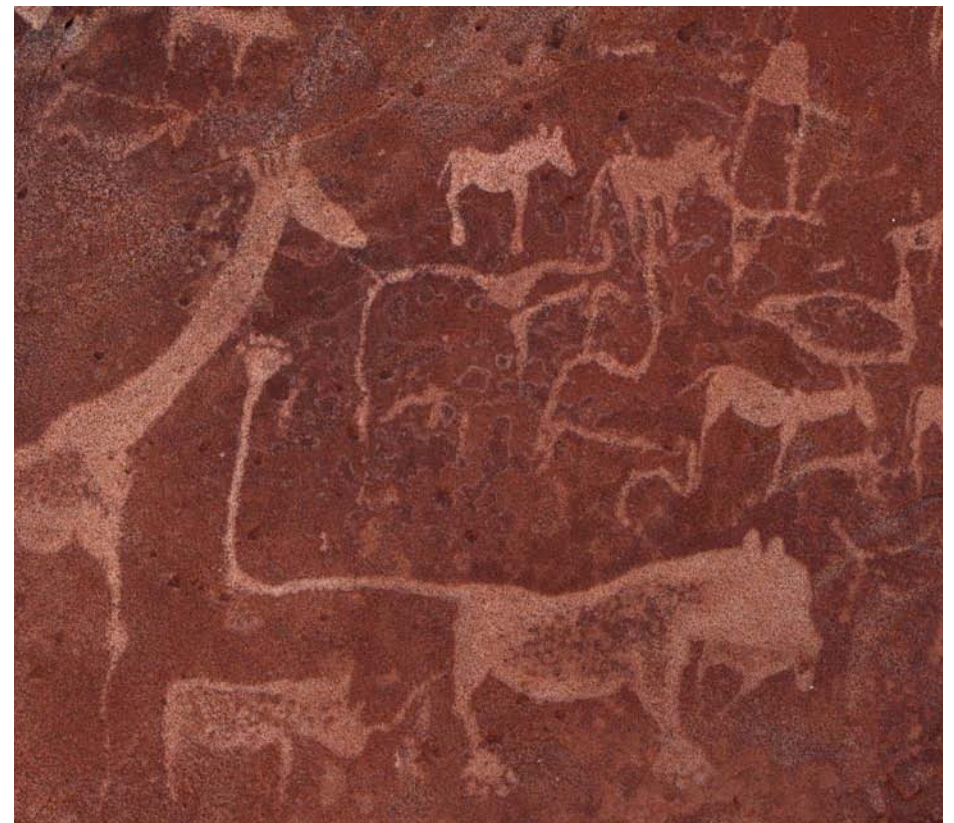
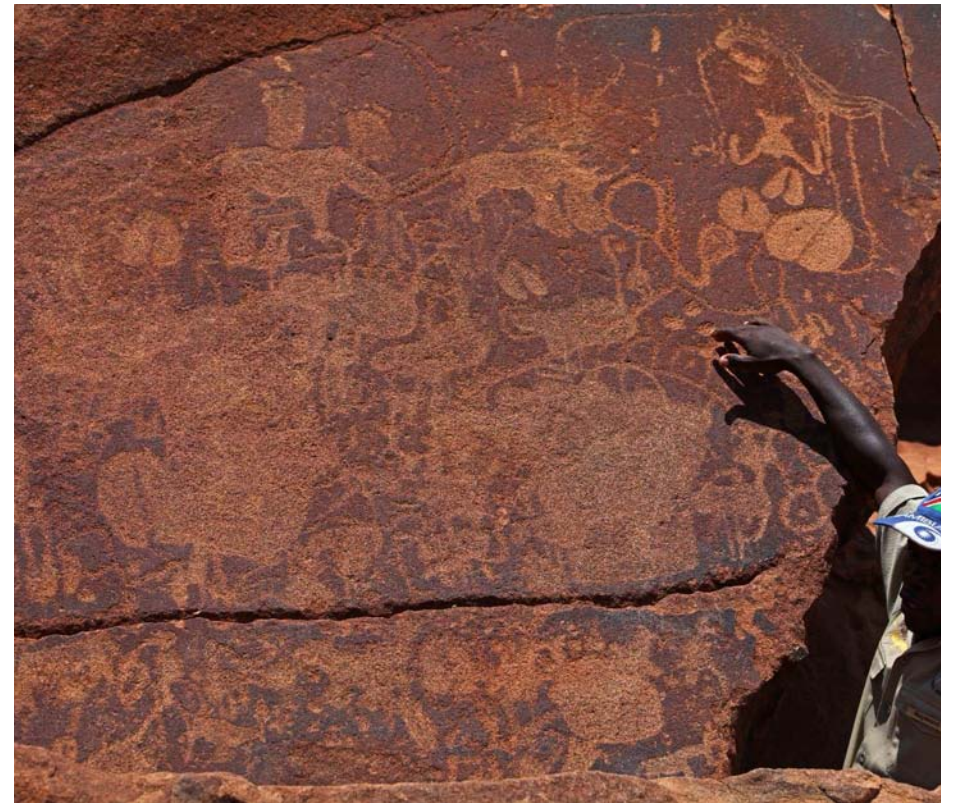


Leaving the body behind

Giraffe are very common in the Twyfelfontein rock art, and characteristically shown without hooves, their legs tapering away in long thin lines. This represents the sensation of rising up into the air, as felt by the shaman in trance. Sometimes the giraffe body is shown distorted or hollow, as the shaman feels his shape changing. A shaman who has changed into a giraffe is shown with five protrusions from the head, representing the five digits of the human foot.

Multiple meanings

Each and every feature of an engraving is deliberate and holds a specific meaning. Sometimes the meaning is difficult to establish directly, but often an informed guess is possible. The 'dancing kudu', for example, shows an unusually pregnant female. Kudu were valued as potent symbols of fertility and this may explain the choice of a kudu cow for the image. However, we cannot know all the multiple meanings that the images held for the artists and viewers.

























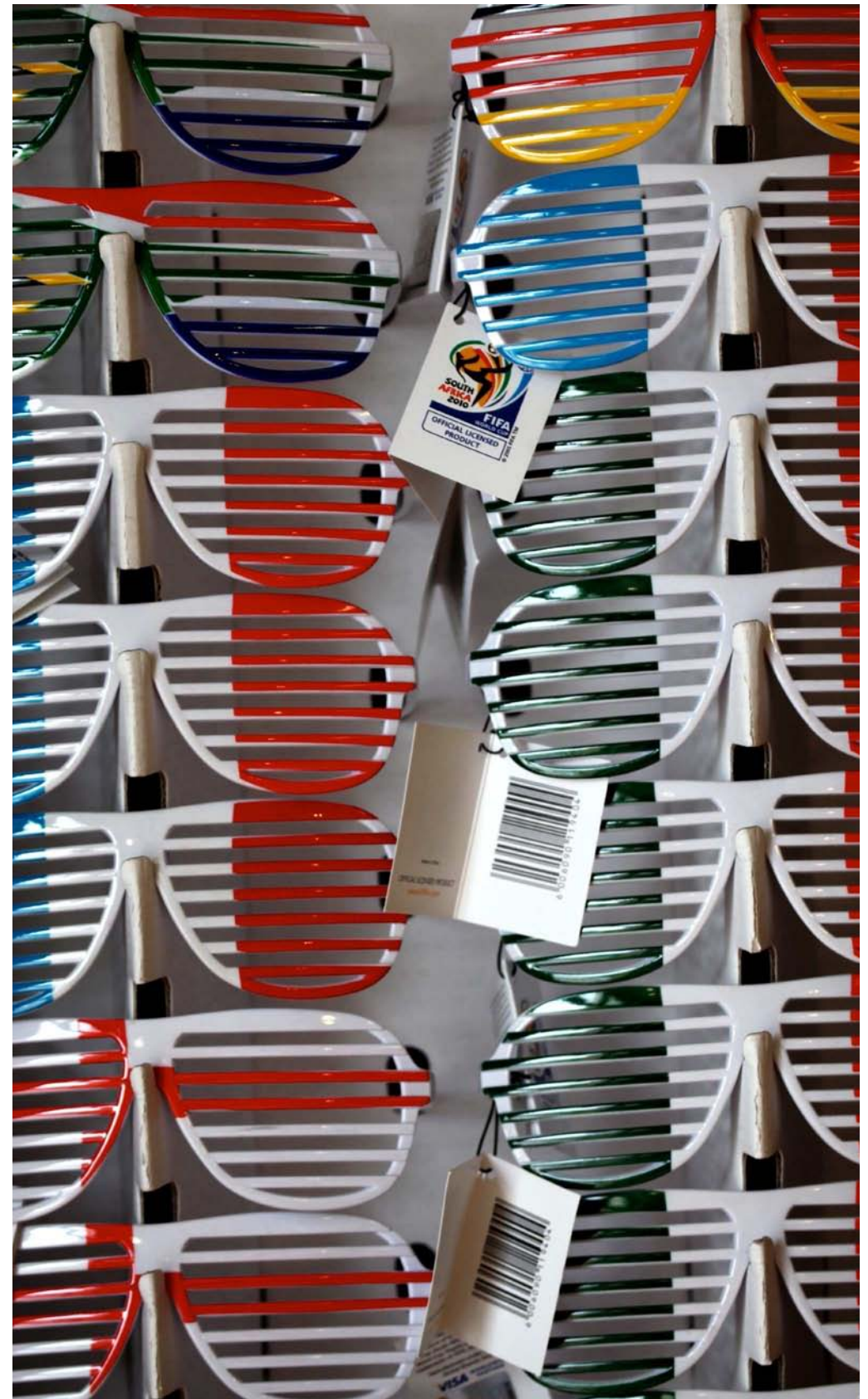


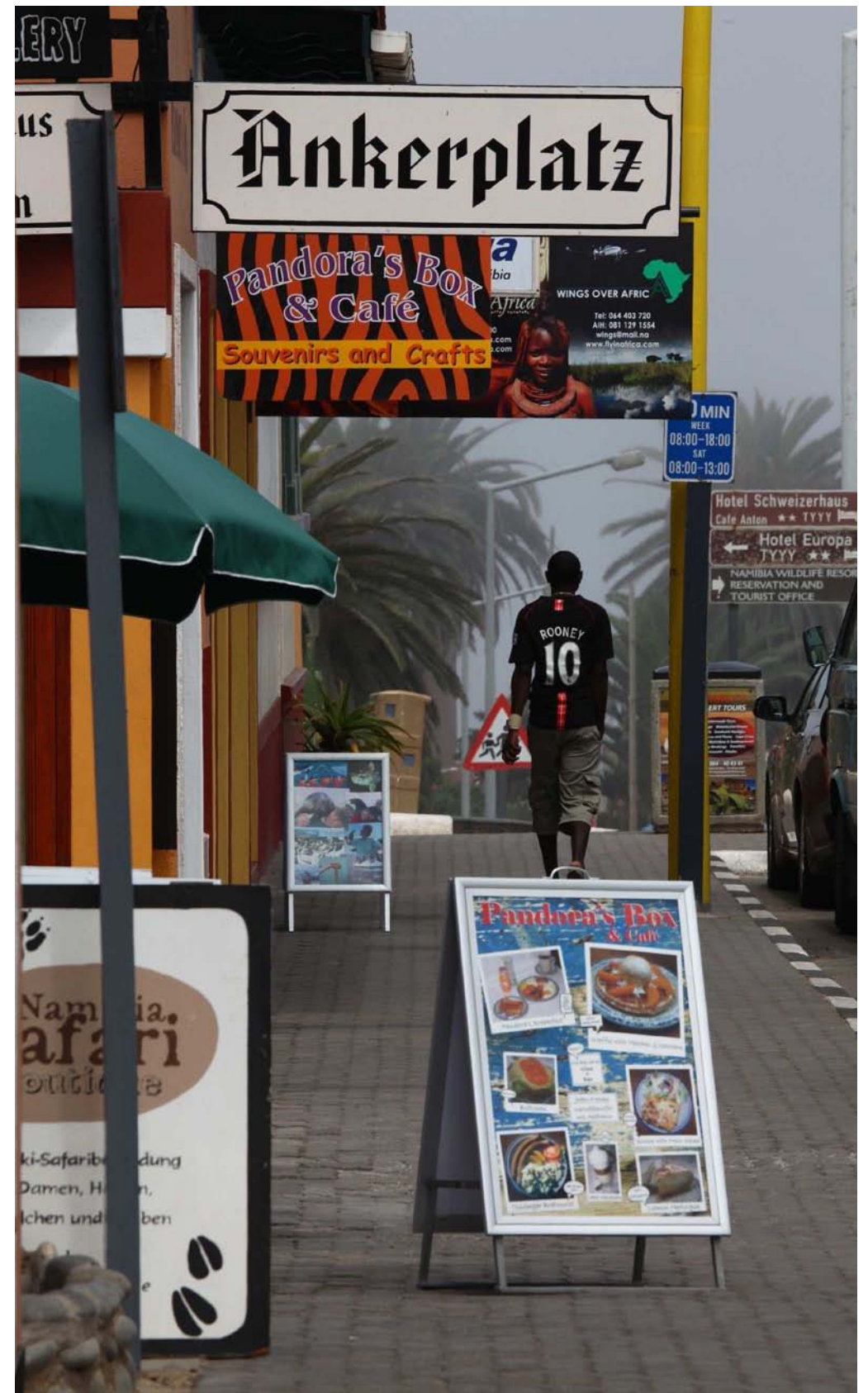
Swakopmund sits on the west coast of Africa, a popular vacation retreat in Namibia. We were here for two days, enjoying the beach, and the streetscapes of a most interesting town. The architecture is very European (reflecting the German heritage of Namibia) and the standard of living is in sharp contrast to many areas that we passed through earlier. It was nice to put our feet up for a couple of days and not to have to set up the tents.



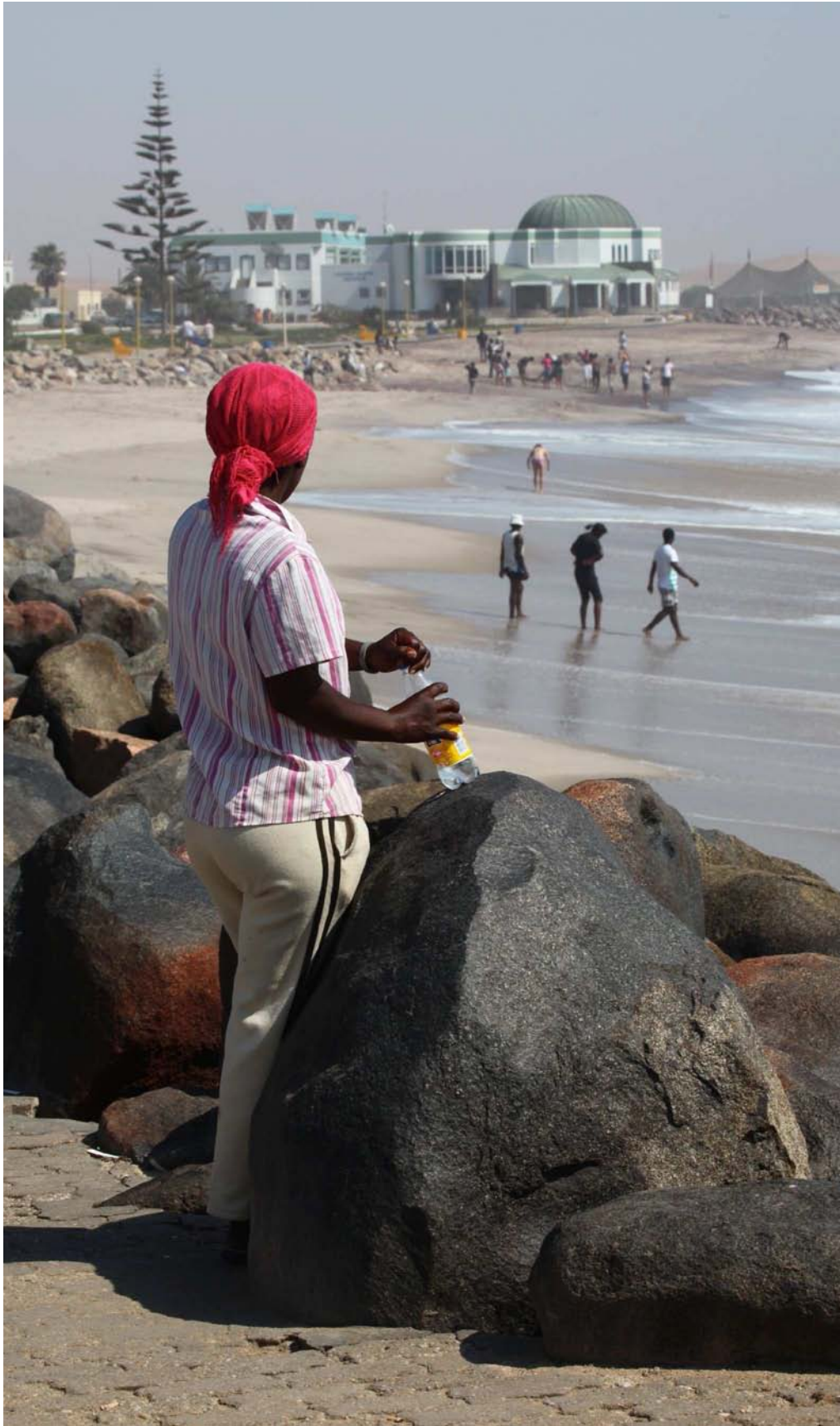


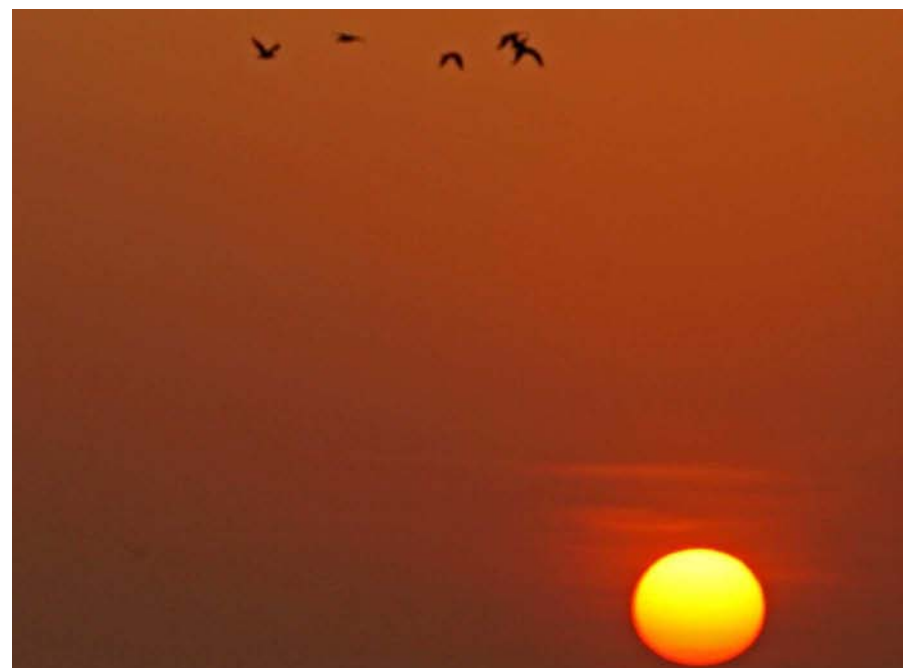












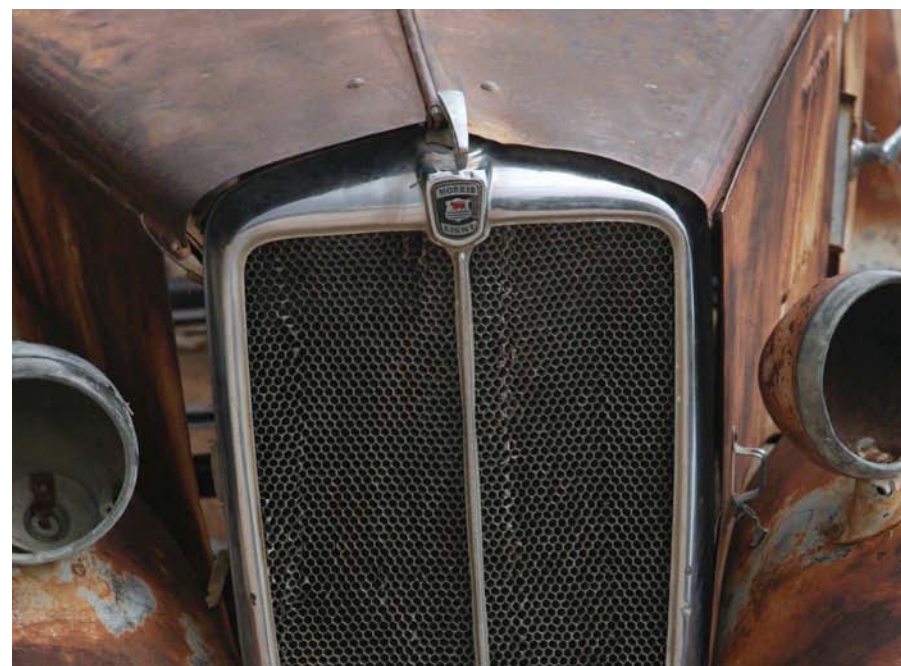
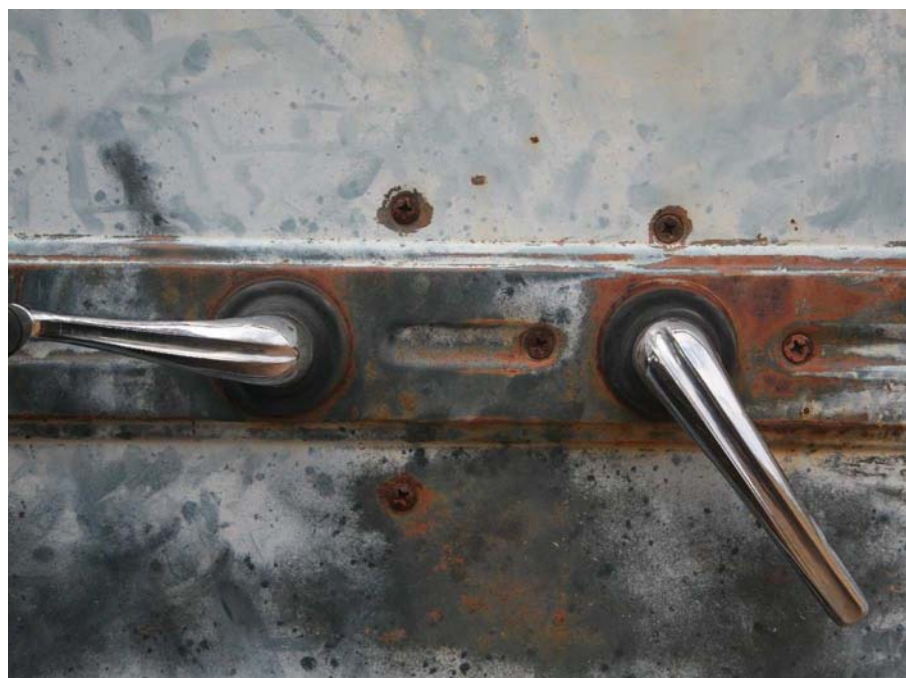
















Our visit to SOSSUVLEI and the great dunes of Namibia is something we have been anticipating most of the trip. It is an early morning start, (4:30 a.m.) to be at the gate of the National Park. These are the highest dunes in the world. We are lucky, it is a quiet morning, only 10 cars in line. Thomas has told us the line can sometimes be 10 K. We have a beautiful day for our visit. By 7:30 we have arrived at Dune 45, the only dune where climbing is permitted. Climbing it early in the morning has been a good decision. By noon, when we are at the Dead Lake, it is 55 degrees C - unbearable were it humid, which it is not. The images from the dunes are certainly not unique to us and they are known throughout the world. I hope our pictures will continue to give meaning to this very special day.

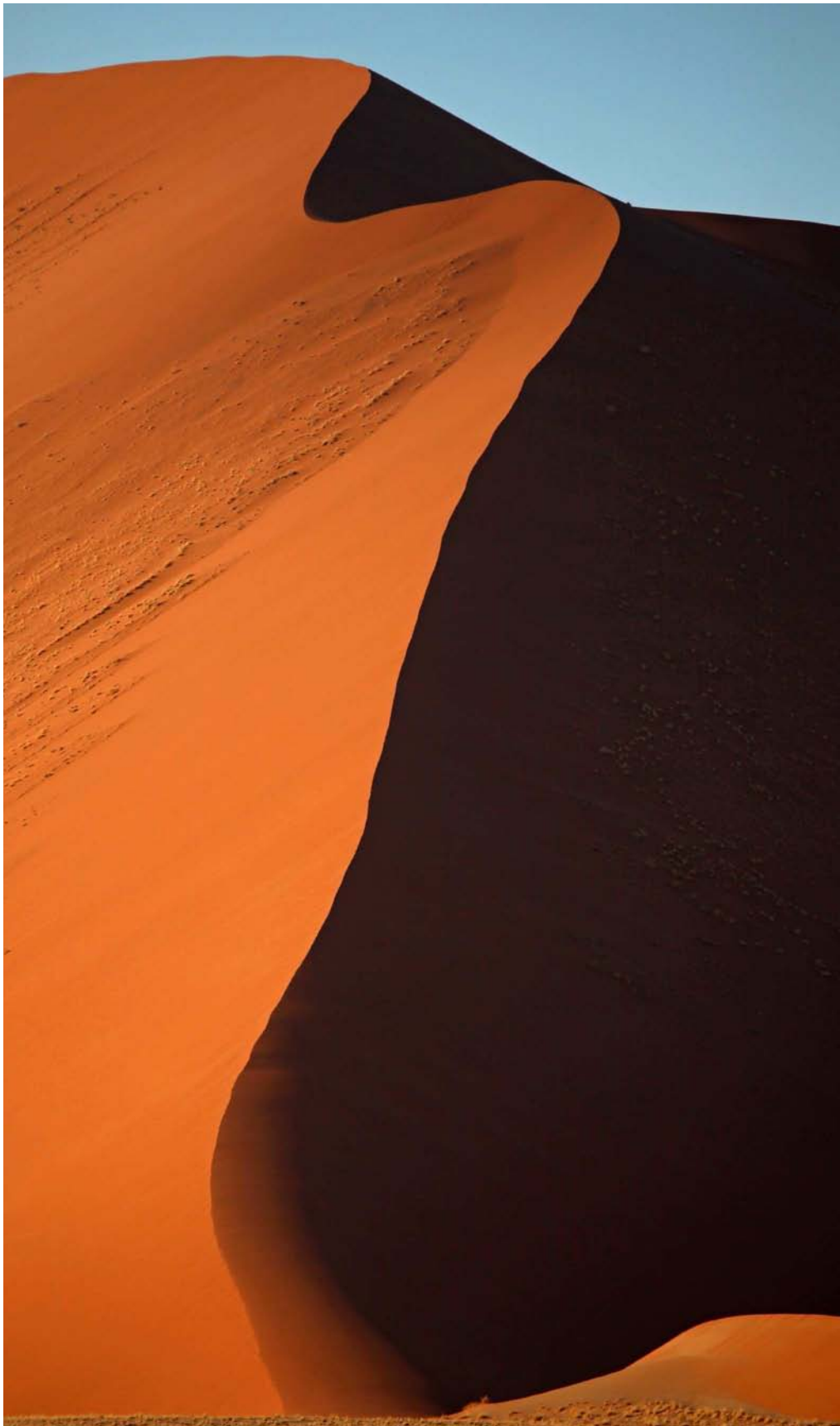


















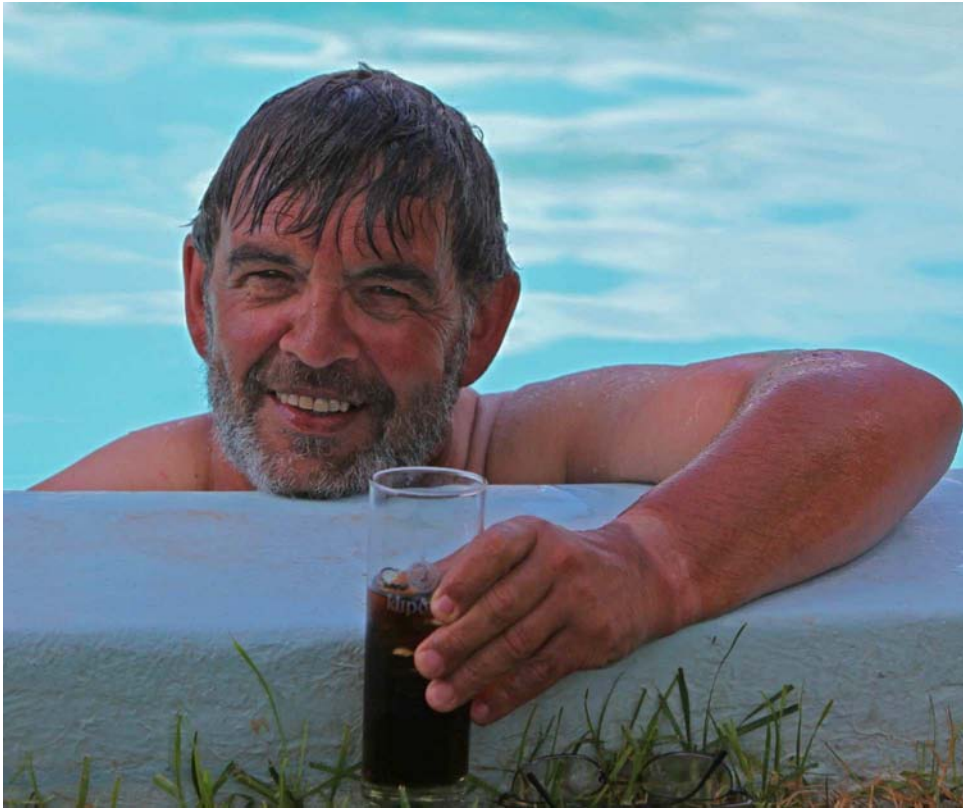




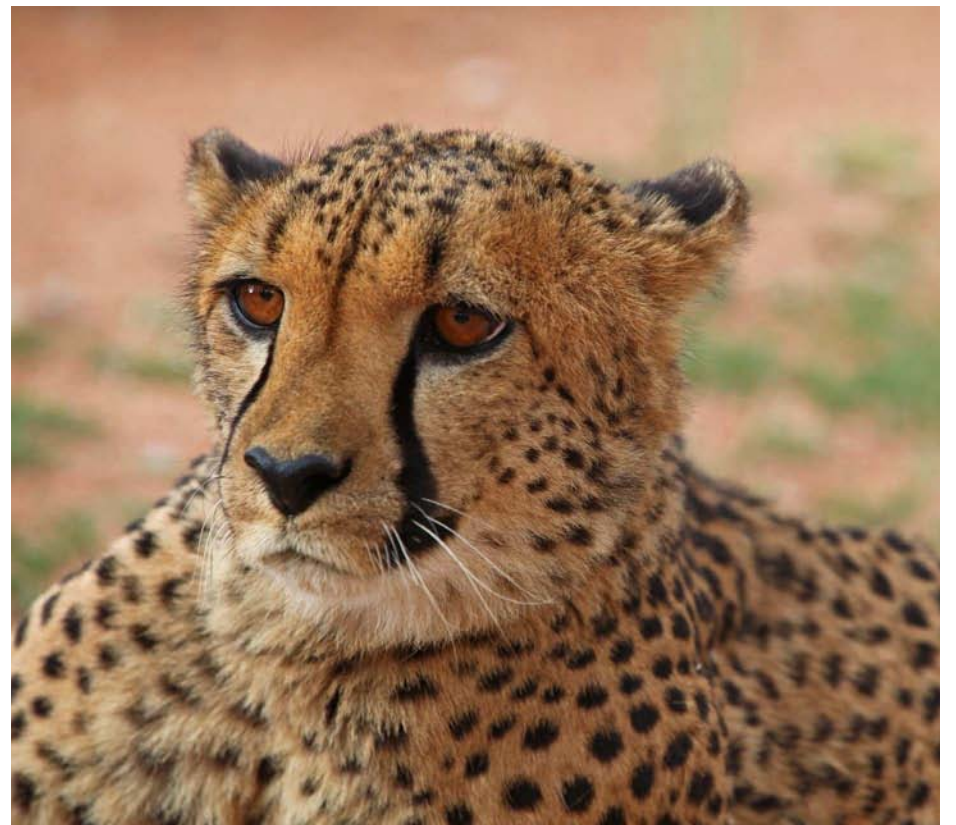
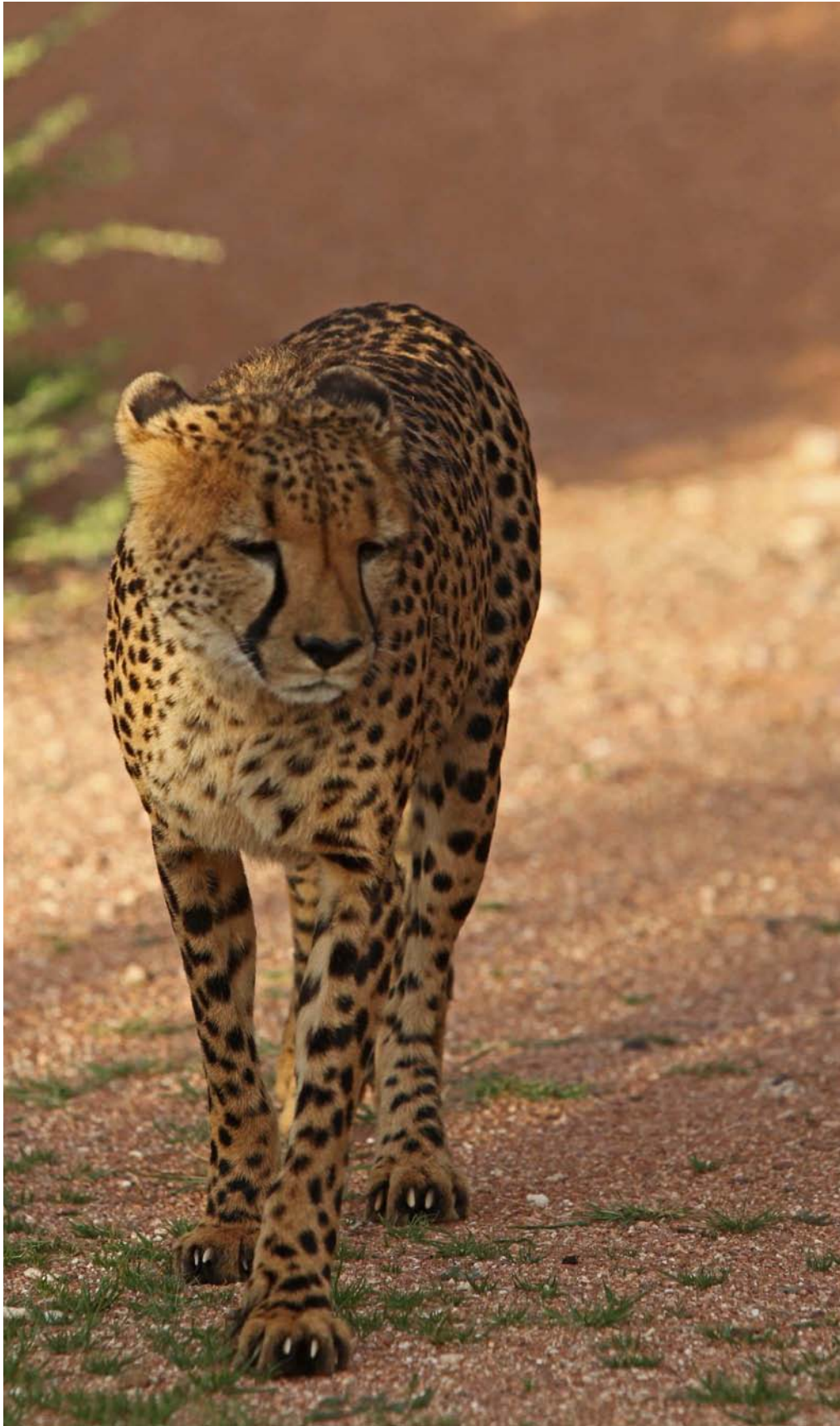






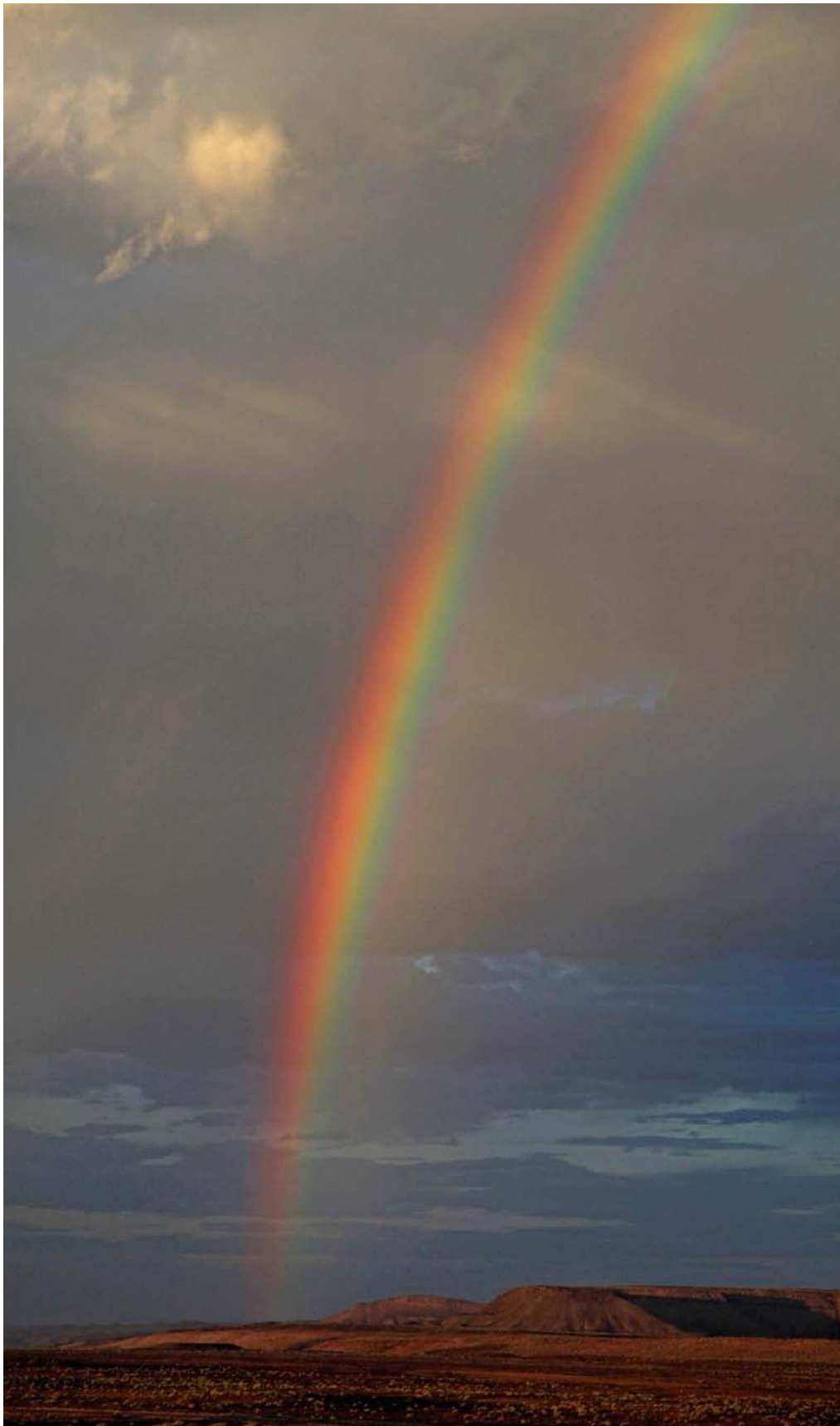


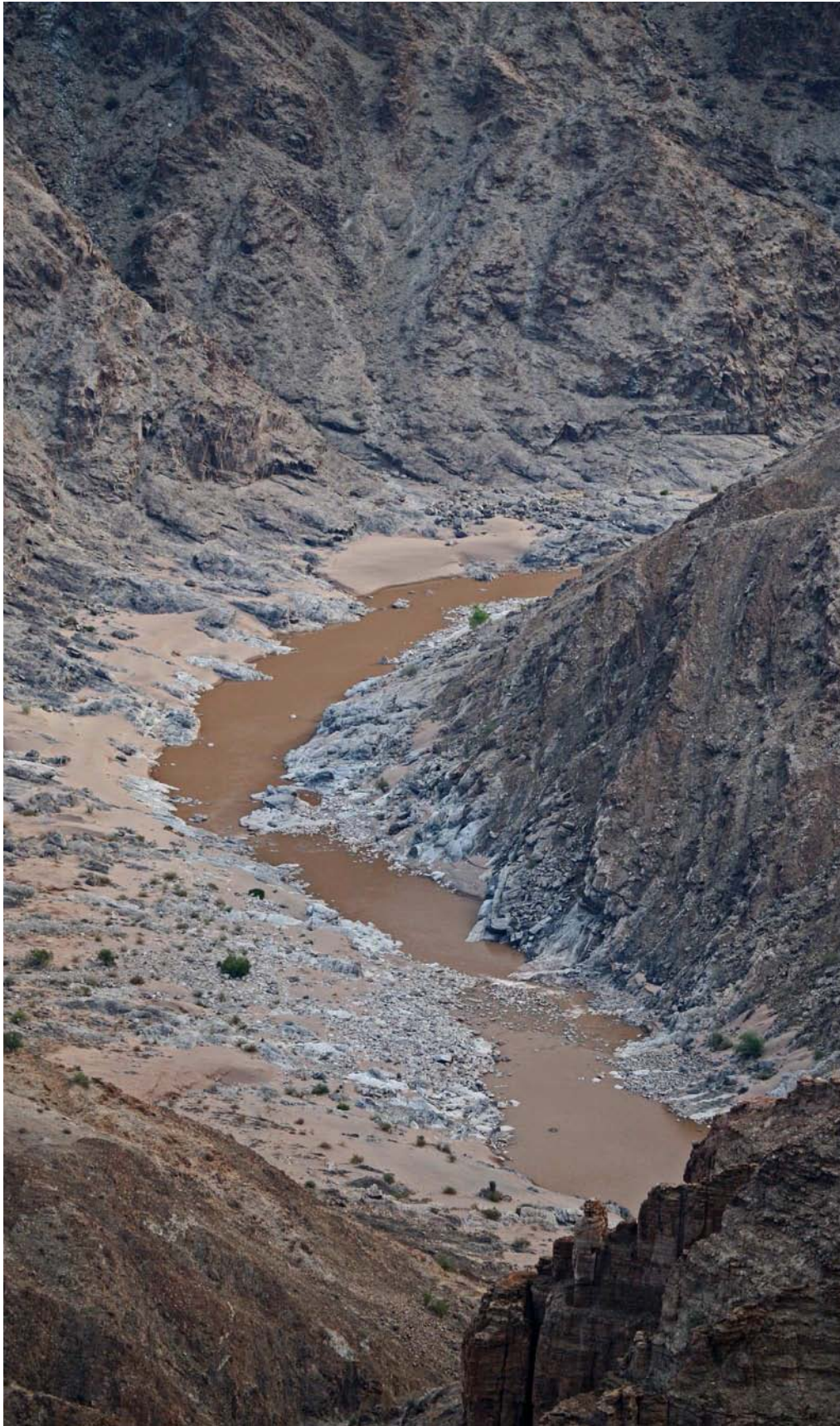




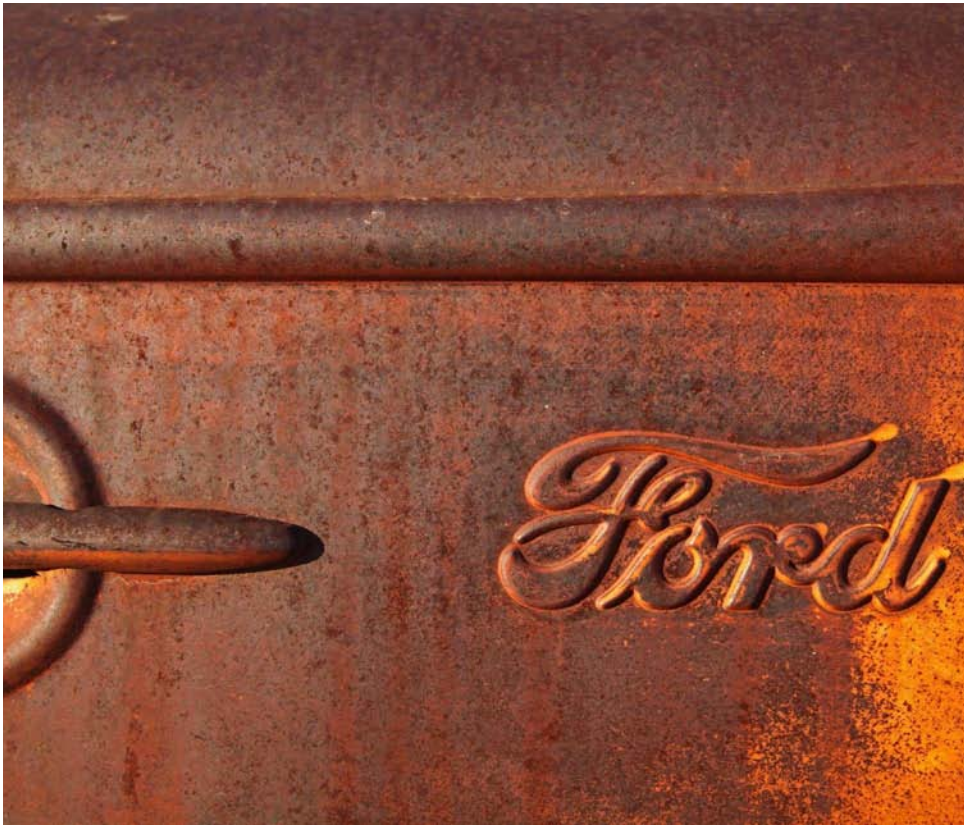
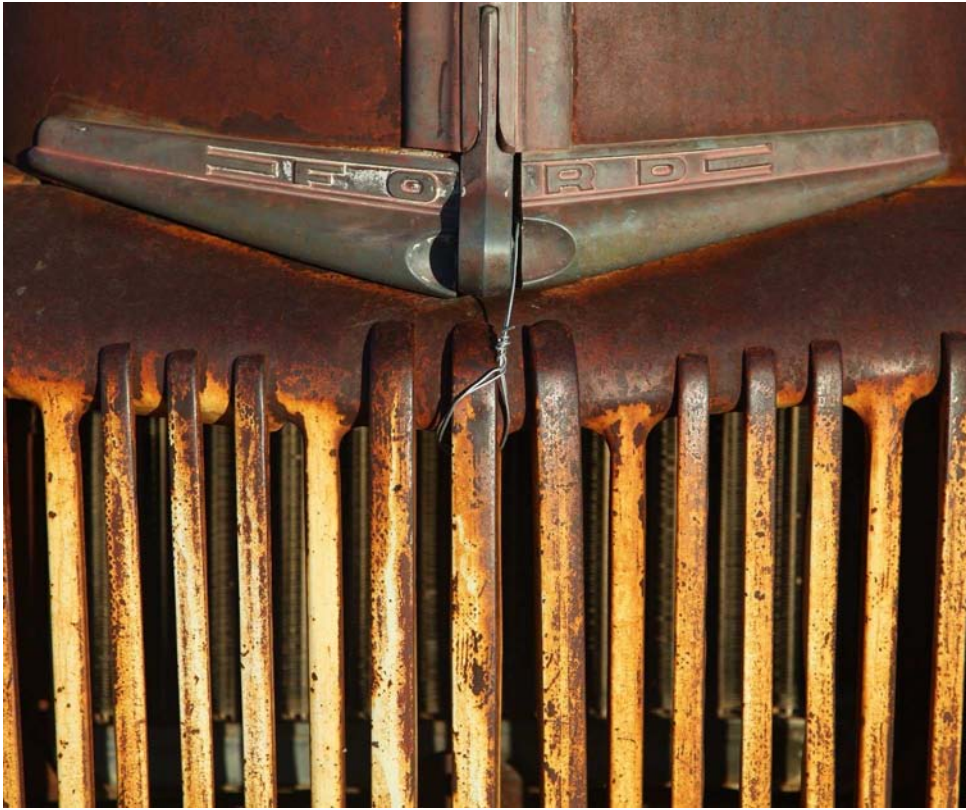


The last week of the Namibia sector of our trip continued to show us the diversity of this country. At the Canon Road House, we enjoyed the authenticity of a "Western style" outpost. Antique vehicles were wonderful subjects in early morning light. We spent an evening at the Fish River Canyon, considered by some to be the Grand Canyon of Africa, watching a double rainbow form over the plateau. Ai-Aisa saw us swimming in the thermal springs before moving on to the Orange River, the natural border between Namibia and South Africa. We stayed two days at the Felix Unite Lodge, kayaking 20 kilometres on this river. Heading to South Africa on the last of 22 days of travel in our Toyota Landcruiser, after setting our tents each night and cooking our meals with our portable kitchen, we departed Namibia with a special regard for this country. We agreed we would return, given the opportunity. Entering South Africa, we spent an evening at the Gecko Game Reserve where we were treated to drumming lessons and a country "walk" with Charles, our local guide, to Elephant Rock. By evening, we were in Cape Town, the beginning of the next two weeks.













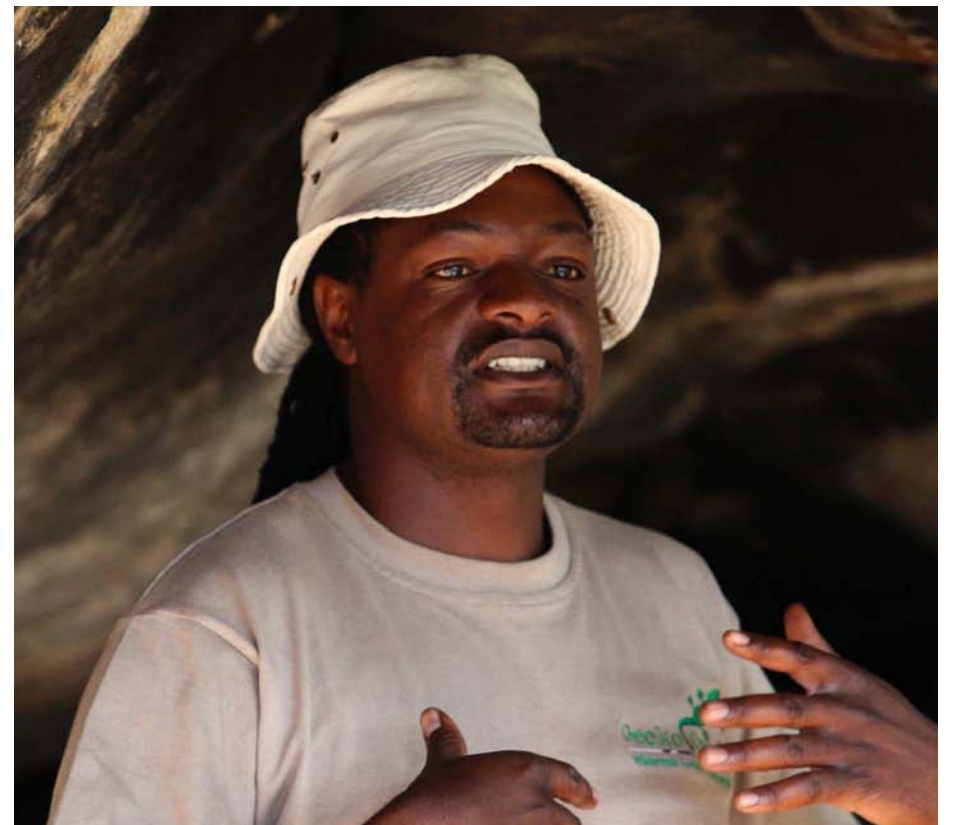
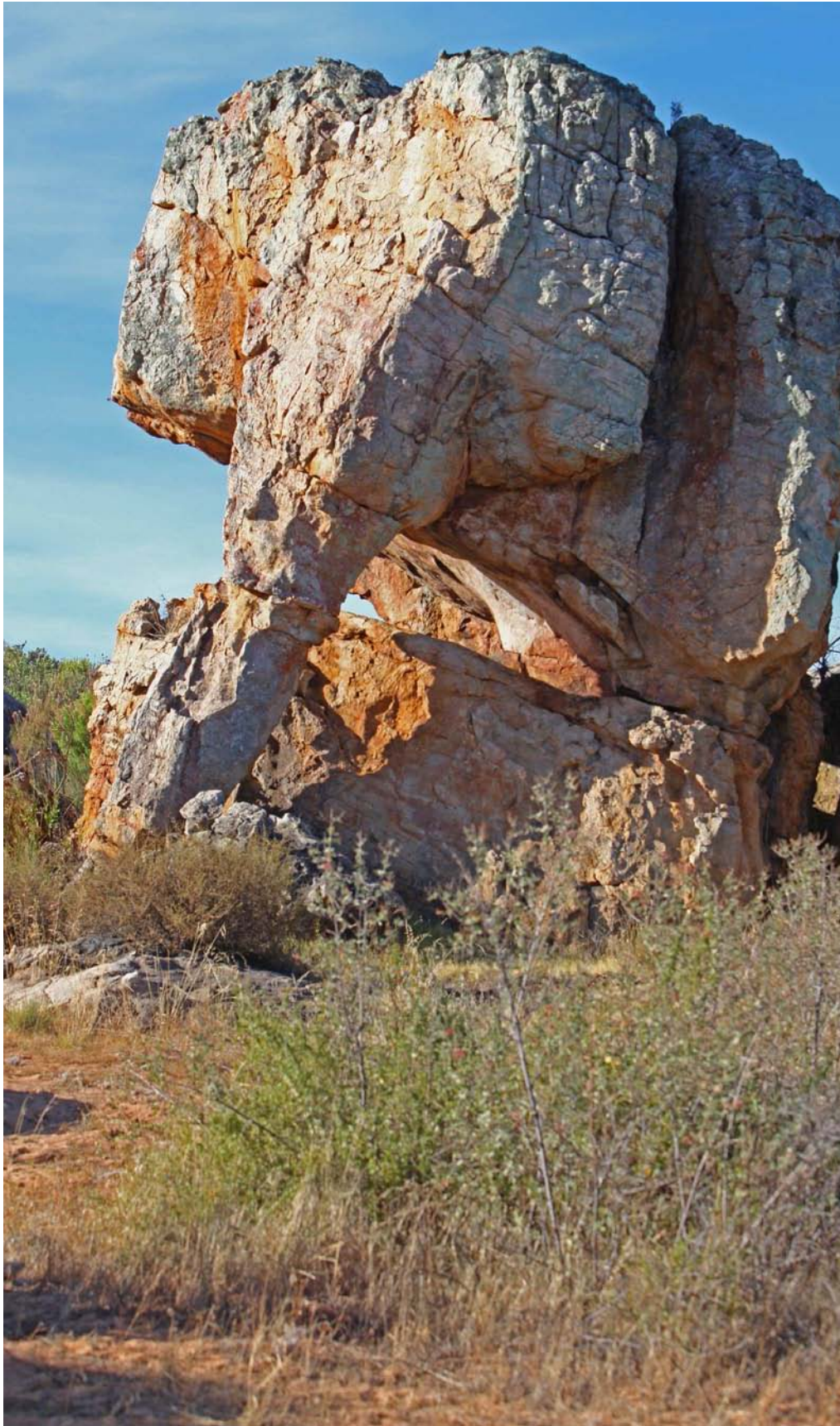


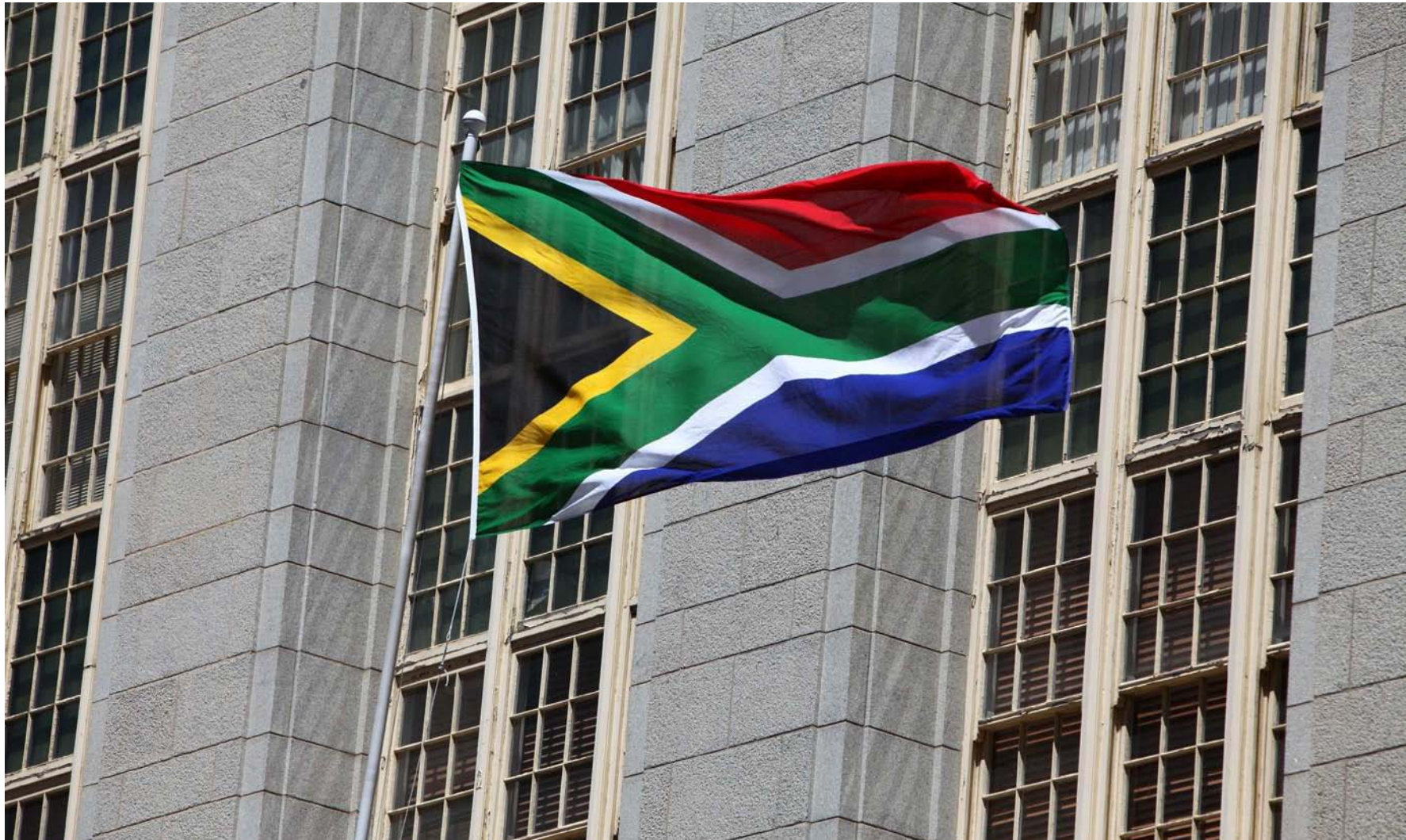












How to describe our two weeks in South Africa! Two days with Thomas, our wonderful Zimbabwean guide visiting Table Rock, Hout Bay and taking the Cape Point Excursion (posing at Cape of Good Hope). It is an emotional good bye to this caring, skilled and attentive individual. We need to remember his words - "If you make it positive, it will be positive". On our own, we move to Black Heath Lodge - how lucky for us to meet Antony and John. The Hop On - Hop Off, the Harbour Tour, walkabouts - all part of knowing Cape Town before setting out on the Garden Tour arranged by Antony for the next ten days. He has prebooked B&B's and small inns for us and "rents" us their car for the trip. Hermanus, Arniston, Kassiebaai (a fishing village), Sedgefield (our three day stay at Lakeview Lodge) Mossel Bay, Plattenburg Bay (the Elephant Sanctuary and largest bird aviary in the world), Doudshorn (ostrich racing at Highgate), Swellingdam, Franschhoek and Glenwood Winery but a few of the names we will remember. Our day at Robben Island, the memorable tour guide's connection of the three M's (Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King and Mandela) and the legacy that will be with us forever. A trip to remember!

