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Martin Rikli Exhibition Group  
Exhibit Labels

**Label 1: Album 1**

1. Martin Rikli  
   Germany, 1898-1969   
   “Abessinien 1935-1936”, [Album 1 of 4] ca 1935-1936  
   Photo Album
2. Berliner Illustrierte Nachtausgabe  
   Saturday, August 31, 1935  
   “Abschiedsaudiez bei Kaiser Haile Selassie” (Parting audience for Emperor Haile Selassie)  
   Newspaper article

This first of four albums compiled by Martin Rikli following his expedition to Eastern Africa contains the beginnings of his journey to and throughout Ethiopia. Rikli’s group departed from Marseilles, France and traveled through Egypt via the Suez Canal before arriving in Eastern Africa. This album also includes a large selection of intimate photographs of the Emperor Haile Selassie, which illustrates Rikli’s unique relationship with the Emperor as one of his official imperial photographers.

The headline of the newspaper article, “Abschiedsaudienz bei Kaiser Haile Selassie” translates to “Parting Audience with the Emperor Haile Selassie.” The caption for the main photo tells us that Dr. Martin Rikli, seen behind the Emperor Haile Selassie on the right-hand side, was present at this social gathering in the royal palace along with other distinguished European guests.

The caption for the second smaller photo tells us that Dr. Martin Rikli is in conversation with the governor of Walaga, Bedweded Makonnen. As a parting gift of friendship, the Governor gave Dr. Rikli a large elephant tusk.

**Label 2: Album 2**

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
“Abessinien 1935-1936”, [Album 2 of 4] ca 1935-1936  
Photo Album

This second of four albums features pictures predominantly focused on the people and places in and around Addis Ababa, the capital city of modern day Ethiopia. Rikli documented several types of scenes including religious ceremonies, schools, market places and court hearings. Also included are pictures of European diplomats interacting with the other Europeans present in Ethiopia, as well as with the Emperor during formal social occasions.

**Label 3: Album 3**

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
“Abessinien 1935-1936”, [Album 3 of 4] ca 1935-1936  
Photo Album

This third of four albums departs from the themes of the second album and turns to matters regarding military action as Rikli documents the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. The photos show a progression from military training and soldiers’ barracks, to the result of the invasion as depicted by burned buildings, trashed streets and partially covered corpses in and around Addis Ababa, the capital city.

**Label 4: Distinguished Characters**

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Emperor Haile Selassie in profile view with Frau Hilde Johanssen], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 1  
11.5 x 9cm (original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Emperor Haile Selassie on throne with others nearby], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 1  
11.5 x 8.5cm (original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Ethiopian Emperor seated with European Diplomat], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 1  
11.5 x 8.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Ministers Bodard and Barton toast with Brandy sniffers], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 1  
11.75 x 8.75cm (original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Emperor Haile Selassie seen in background], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 1  
16 x 11cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Two Europeans with Emperor Haile Selassie I], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
11.75 x 8cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[A formal social occasion: Three European women in gowns and furs, along with Empress Menen], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
11.75 x 8.5cm(original)

Throughout his journey in Ethiopia, Martin Rikli encountered characters of all types. Here, we will take a deeper look at the distinguished characters Rikli met, including the Emperor and Empress of Ethiopia, as well as many important colonial European diplomats who were present at social events and political meetings.

In photos 1, 2 and 3, we see remarkably intimate portraits of the Emperor Haile Selassie I. Martin Rikli had special camera privileges as one of the imperial photographers, and was able to take such up-close and personal photographs of the Emperor as those seen here.

Haile Selassie I was Emperor of Ethiopia from 1930 until 1974. He was born Tafari Makonnen on July 23, 1892 and took the name Haile Selassie, meaning “Power of the Trinity”, upon his ascension to the throne.

In photo 5, we see the Empress Menen Asfaw, born Wolete Giyorgis on March 25, 1889. She remained the wife of the Emperor until her death in February 1962.

Outside of these royal, distinguished characters, we find Rikli documenting the social lives of the European diplomatic elite present between 1935 and 1936. Of these we see several recurring characters throughout the Rikli albums, including Frau Hilde Johanssen, seen in photo 1, and Ministers Bodard and Barton, seen in photo 4.

These and many other distinguished characters repeatedly appear in Rikli’s photographic scenes throughout his Ethiopian albums.

**Label 5: Vacation and Leisure**

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Landscape view of grasslands, trees and mountains], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 1  
11.5 x 8cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Frau Boud woman shades herself with an umbrella], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 1  
8.75 x 12cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[A European woman in a riding outfit poses on a rocky lake shore], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
12 x 8.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Portrait of a European woman on a wooden boat], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
8.5 x 10.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[European woman in her bathing suit poses for a portrait in the grass], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
11.25 x 8.25cm(original)

Now that you have been introduced to some of our characters, we can take you through some of the scenes they acted in during Rikli’s time in Ethiopia. Throughout Album 1 and 2, we see many pictures of Europeans engaging in vacation and leisure activities, including bathing, horseback riding and hiking through the grasslands. These stand out in strong contrast to the photos of the local Ethiopians who are often photographed doing hard manual labor, or engaging in trade in market scenes.

In photo 1 we see a very traditional landscape photograph of grasslands, trees and mountains in the distance. It is amidst these beautiful landscapes that Rikli took many posed photographs of his European friends, especially the wives of diplomats as they relax in the countryside.

This leisurely attitude is exemplified in photo 5, where a European woman poses casually in her bathing suit in the grasses beside a lake.

\*Insert information about Ethiopia being marketed as an exotic vacation destination.

**Label 6: Ethiopia as Exotic**

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[European man and woman hold a monkey while an Ethiopian holds the leashes], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
8.75 x 11.75cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Frau Hilde Johanssen in fur collar with monkeys on leashes], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
11.5 x 8.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Monkey on a chain with a youngster in her arms], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
7.5 x 10cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[An Ethiopian man holds a lion cub], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
8.5 x 11.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Ethiopian man in tribal headdress], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
9 x 11.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Six Ethiopian women dance on a rural path], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
7.5 x 5.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Posed topless portrait of an Ethiopian woman], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
5.5 x 8cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Posed nude portrait of an Ethiopian woman; she wears a beaded necklace], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
8.25 x 6cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Posed topless portrait of an Ethiopian woman], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
4.75 x 7.25cm(original)

European attitudes toward the indigenous Ethiopian population were, not surprisingly, of a colonial, patronizing and “othering” breed. That is to say, Europeans believed the native African population was developmentally behind European civilizations and needed European intervention. However, that did not stop a European fascination with what they felt were exotic elements within Ethiopia.

European women were photographed excitedly looking on as Ethiopian men tamed lion cubs, as well as playing with small, semi-domesticated monkeys on leashes. All things traditionally Ethiopian was interesting in their raw, untamed backwardness, and Martin Rikli was not immune to this tendency.

He photographed these activities with the exotic animals, but also photographed the local people in a way that emphasized their exotic “otherness”. In photo \_\_, we see the Ethiopian man in a traditional, tribal headdress. Photos \_\_ - \_\_\_ are part of a series of photographs of nude Ethiopian women in Album 3. There is a posed quality to these photos that we do not believe to be accidental.

\*Insert bit about exotic women being exciting for European men. 1930’s playboy?  
Scandalous

**Label 7: Culture Clashes**

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Three servers in turbans and white gloves offer alcoholic beverages], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 3  
11.75 x 8.25cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[European civilian men line up outside a villa flying a Nazi Luftwaffe flag], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 3  
11.25 x 8.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Ethiopian man in uniform stands at the window of a train car and displays the front page of a German newspaper: Hitler is in the cover photo], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
11.5 x 8.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[European man appears to survey the fire damage in a business district of Addis Ababa], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 3  
11.25 x 8.25cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Street view of Addis Ababa after Italian invasion; signs of looting in the streets], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 3  
11.5 x 8.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Street view of business district in Addis Ababa shows burned buildings and trash in the street], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 3  
11.5 x 8cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[A European man and woman stand in pith helmets while Ethiopians look on in the background], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 2  
11.75 x 8.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[An uncovered corpse], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 3  
17.25 x 11.5cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Italian notice posted for public viewing], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 3  
11.5 x 17.25 cm(original)

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[A corpse in the street is partly covered with paper and foliage], ca 1935-1936  
Photograph from Album 3  
11.5 x 8.5cm(original)

The interactions between local Ethiopians and the occupying Europeans was a clash of cultures that often read as a tangible tension in the photos that Martin Rikli captured during his time in Ethiopia. The contrast of cultures is seen in photo \_\_\_, where the black Africans, wearing European style white gloves, are servants at a European social event.

This contrast is also seen in less obvious photos, such as photo \_\_, where the European couple is the subject of a vacation-like photograph, as the local Ethiopians look on in the background.

In some photos we see the symbols of a growing Nazi empire in Rikli’s home country of Germany. In photo \_\_, an Ethiopian soldier holds a newspaper, the front cover of which includes a large picture of Adolf Hitler. In other photos throughout Album 3, we see Nazi flags, and even a portrait of Hitler hung on the living room wall of a European diplomat’s house. However, while these photos represent an intangible tension between the African and European cultures, Martin Rikli also captured photographs of very literal clashes between cultures.

One of the most pivotal Ethiopian moments that Martin Rikli was able to capture on film was the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in \_\_\_. This very literal clash of two cultures results in thousands of deaths, as the well-equipped Italians attacked the Ethiopians whose defenses included traditional tribal warfare weapons. The middle and end portions of Rikli’s third photo album document this Ethiopian tragedy, with photos of burned buildings, looted stores, and most striking, the photos of partially covered dead bodies in the streets of Addis Ababa, the once-great capital city of Ethiopia.

\*Insert why Italians invaded Ethiopia.

**Label 8: Who was Martin Rikli?**

Photographer Unknown  
[Photo of Dr. Martin Rikli]  
ca. 1930

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
[Album 4 of 4] “Anmerkungen zur Lichtbildsammlung” (Notes for Photo Collection), ca 1935-1936  
Photo Album

Martin Rikli  
Germany, 1898-1969   
“Letter to Written by Martin Rikli from Addis Ababa” ca 1935-1936

Martin Rikli, filmmaker and Hermann Weist, author  
Germany, ca. 1930s  
“Abessinien von Heute – Blickpuenkt der Welt”   
Film Program for Rikli Documentary

Berliner Illustrierte Nachtausgabe  
Saturday, August 31, 1935  
“Abschiedsaudiez bei Kaiser Haile Selassie” (Parting audience for Emperor Haile Selassie)  
Newspaper article

Dr. Martin Rikli was a photographer, film director, cinematographer and author. Born on January 19, 1898 in Zurich, he received his education in both Switzerland and Germany. He devoted much of his academic work to the study of photography, especially the chemical reactions processes that made film exposure possible.

By the mid-1920’s he was employed by the camera company, Ziess Ikon, but used his spare time to create films. In 1927, he joined a group of researchers traveling to German East Africa and his film documentary of the expedition \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, gained wide acclaim the following year. Over the span of approximately 14 or 15 years, he created dozens of films while working for the German Ufa cinema company. Titles included:

In 1929, Rikli traveled to North Africa to film a documentary on Italian colonization efforts in Tunisia, Libya and Tripoli. Only 6 years later, he was again in Africa, this time in Ethiopia. The photographs he took during this journey make up the four albums we are displaying here today.

Many of Rikli’s African photographs were later used for propaganda by the Nazi regime, as his work focused on the successes of German and Italian fascist states, as well as the advancements in science and technology. He is widely recognized as a leading propaganda correspondent for the Nazi party, and remained a loyal supporter of the Nazis throughout the 1930’s and WWII.

In 1944 he anticipated the German defeat, departed the Ufa cinema company and returned to Zurich where he continued to create films until his death in 1969.

**Label 9: African Geography in the 1930’s**

Unknown Publishers  
ca. 1935-1936  
German Newspaper Clippings

Unknown Publisher  
Colonial East Africa in 1935  
Map  
(Don’t have a picture. Object to be accessioned by Smathers Library soon.)

While modern African geography is similar to that of the 1930s, many of the borders have changed since African countries began gaining independence from their European occupiers in the early 1960s. Here were see two maps.

The first is a map of Ethiopia in the 1930’s. Included in the map are detailed markings of ports, as well as the sole railway line that ran through the country.

The second is a map of East African in 1935. It includes Ethiopia, as well as its surrounding countries, complete with the flags of the occupying European nations.

We also included newspaper clippings of articles written about Ethiopian during European occupation. Several photos includes were taken by Martin Rikli, and captions discuss the advancement of Ethiopian society thanks to European intervention.