



From the series *Boys of Volta* by Jeremy Snell

JEREMY SNELL

Beneath the beauty of a Ghanaian lake lies a complex tale of life and loss



Lake Volta in Ghana is a vast artificial reservoir, formed in 1965 when a hydroelectric dam was created downstream. Today the Akosombo Dam generates the bulk of Ghana's electricity, while the lake has become a centre for the country's fishing industry – an industry built on child exploitation. According to the International Labour Organization, 20,000 enslaved children work there.

Jeremy Snell, a Brooklyn-based photographer and cinematographer, first visited Lake Volta after being commissioned by non-profit organisation International Justice Mission to create content for a campaign against child trafficking.

Struck by the character and beauty of the place, Snell felt compelled to return and develop *Boys of Volta*, his own project about the lake. With their delicate colours, soft lighting and silhouetted portraiture, his images portray Lake Volta as a dreamy, almost mythical place.

“Life on and around the lake seemed like a fairytale,” he explains. “Three thousand miles of dammed water encompass what used to be large forests and hillsides, so the trunks and tips of thousands of trees can be seen as you drift through its waters.”

Some of those who appear in *Boys of Volta* are fisherboys, others local children whom Snell sought permission to photograph.

“Creating a sense of security and respect with the kids was very important while photographing them,” he says. “For me, the photographs point to the beauty of the lake and those who live on it, the complexity of life in the area, and the treacherous situations some of these kids find themselves in.”

Boys of Volta is published by Setanta Books. setantabooks.com and jeremysnell.com