

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2013

SWARA

The Voice of Conservation in East Africa



THE EAST AFRICAN
WILD LIFE SOCIETY

DRONES
A SPY IN THE SKY
FOR CONSERVATION?

MANGROVES
THE VITAL ROOTS

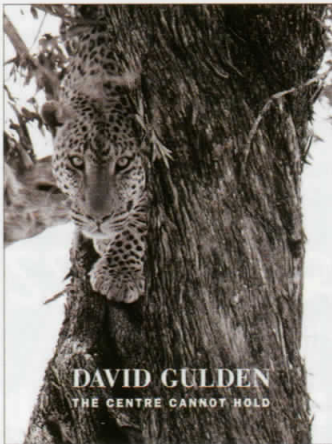
**CITES: WHAT IT
AGREED AND DIDN'T**



for more than seventy medical conditions, ranging from heat stroke and high fevers to delirium, convulsions, 'hysteria', encephalitis, infections and poisoning'. The horn is ground on a special ceramic plate and mixed in hot water to be drunk alone or with other medicines. A new use, and one for which demand is escalating, is as a cure for hangovers and other bodily excesses. Ownership of rare, exotic and expensive goods are an indicator of the wealth and success of the new rich Vietnamese and none better than a rhino horn that also has health benefits.

Rademeyer's journalistic style results in a text which jumps around in time and place and which can be irritating for the reader but he brings an insight into the character of the leading players Groenewald, Lemtongthai and Steyl and of the seedy background to the rhino poaching story normally hidden from the public. It is not an easy read but worthwhile. ●

Reviewed by Felix Patton



The Centre Cannot Hold By David Gulden

Wildlife evokes the talents of many great and gifted photographers but it takes a particular mix of talents and artistry to create the images that rush out of the pages in David Gulden's black and white portfolio - *The Centre Cannot Hold**.

Artistry is the word that comes to mind as Gulden creates the settings, the animation, the backdrops and the sheer force and stealth of Africa's wild animals and birds. He builds an electricity of movement often in settings – the Aberdares – that have been bypassed by so many great photographers who focused on the traditional savannah backdrops for their work.

Gulden's stunning collection of images represents 20 years of painstaking patience and observation in remote and tough places. It raises the bar of wildlife photography ascending to the pinnacle of skills placing the book in the annals where Mirella Ricciardi's broader brush *Vanishing Africa* still dominates.

Whilst it's the great animals of Africa – all filmed in East Africa - that are the 'Oscars' of his creativity, the backdrops and the actions of the animals are what strikes a deep chord. The lone bull elephant striding proudly in a glade before a sprawling forest of *Hagenia*, the sparkling mass of spray as a lion shakes off after a Mara thunder storm, the huge *Virunga* silverback in coitus with a mate but captured from behind a party of walkers all frantically pressing to capture the shot of a lifetime.

His determination to give us raptors up close has created some unique images that took hours of patience and personal risk to set up. It gives us the Crowned Eagle feeding its offspring high in a forest canopy or the Pied Kingfisher hunting baby tilapia with a camera set in the water below the skitting fry.

Whilst the portraits of cheetah, lion and leopard – either in high motion or against stunning backdrops of deep forest and open savannah - are in a class of their own, it is the animals of the forests that have been brought into the bright sunlight by his talent.

The mincing Bushbuck captured deep in the bamboo, the portly Giant Forest Hog – once under threat but now a common sight. Bongo - the rare, so elusive and most beautiful forest antelope – is captured by camera trap after three years of placements in the Aberdares. The Mantled Colobus in vibrant motion parachuting between high branches all a flurry of black and white.

The book's devotion to black and white is enlivened by a canny use of back sunlight that creates halos on bristling bodies, a stalking leopard and a rhino in full charge.

Then there are the sweeping vistas of Aberdare forest and mountain capturing the majesty of this lesser known and visited region, where it is rare to pass another vehicle and where it is possible to commune in solitude with the trees, birds and animals as they live and have lived for millennia.

The hard line of 'harmony' between man and beast where the Aberdare fence stretches mile upon mile with deep forest on one side and burgeoning shambas on the other, speaks the realities of today's world.

We have a stunning addition to the great annals of wildlife art through the camera that began with Martin and Osa Johnson one hundred years ago and continues to give us such huge delight in today's world of dwindling wildlife landscapes.

It is a great testimony to its author, his camera, his special powers of observation and movement and to the subjects of his story – both the wildlife and the rich forests and savannahs in which they continue to roam. ●

* *From the poem of William Yeats 1919*

Reviewed by Colin Church