



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of African Art*

Marli Shamir photographs, EEPA 1995-025

Paul Wood

2011

Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art  
National Museum of African Art  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
<b>Title:</b>	Marli Shamir photographs
<b>Identifier:</b>	EEPA.1995-025
<b>Date:</b>	1971
<b>Extent:</b>	229 gelatin silver prints (black and white; 8 x 10 in. or smaller) 89 Photographic prints ((1 v.); black and white; 23 x 18 cm. or smaller)
<b>Source:</b>	National Museum of African Art (U.S.) Shamir, Marli
<b>Language:</b>	Undetermined
<b>Summary:</b>	Photographs taken by Marli Shamir in Mali, in 1971. The majority of the images show architecture in Djenne, Mali. Other images depict architecture of the Dogon in Timbuktu, Gao and San. Photographs from this collection were featured by Labelle Prussin's thesis entitled, "The Architecture of Djenne; African Synthesis and Transformation," (Yale University, 1974) and in her book entitled, "Hatumere: Islamic Design in West Africa," (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). The images have also been displayed in an exhibition entitled, "Marli Shamir Photographs from the Sahel," held in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, in 1976.
<b>Container:</b>	Volume 4

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

Donated by Marli Shamir, 1995.

### Restrictions

Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

### Conditions Governing Use

Permission to reproduce images from the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives must be obtained in advance. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

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## Biographical / Historical

Marli Shamir (1919-2016) was an Israeli photographer known for her extensive work in Mali, the Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso from 1966-1973. Born and raised in Berlin, Shamir started studying photography

during her teenage years and took photography classes at the Contempora Lehrateliers für neue Werkkunst (1934-1937). In 1938, she was forced to immigrate to Israel where she initially lived in a kibbutz. From 1941-1943, she worked at the mineralogy department of the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, and then opened her own studio in Jerusalem in 1945. In 1953, she married Meir Shamir, a former Israeli Diplomat-Ambassador, and from 1966-1973 she lived successively in Mali, Gabon and Cote d'Ivoire. She held a particular fascination with architecture, monuments, mosques, arts and habitants. During her stay in Mali, she met Pascal James Imperato with whom she wrote the article Bokolanfini Mud Cloth of the Bamana of Mali, (African Arts, 1970). In 1976, she produced the exhibition Sahel at the Israeli museum in Jerusalem, which focused on the rural and urban architecture and people of the Sahel. The exhibition toured in Europe later that year. From 1977-1981, she lived in Strasbourg, where she focused on documenting the new style of architecture in Mali. Her work on this project is stored at the Center of Documentation in Strasbourg. In 2005, a book devoted to her photographs from Mali was published by the Grandvaux French Edition House. The National Poet of Mali, Albakaye Ousmane Kounta, collaborated with Shamir on the book of poetry Djenney-Ferey –La terre habitee (published by Grandaux, 2007), which is illustrated with Shamir's photographs. Shamir passed away in 2016 at the age of 93.

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## Arrangement

Images indexed by negative number.

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Dogon (African people)  
Earth Architecture

Cultures:

Dogon (African people)

Types of Materials:

Black-and-white photographs  
Photographic prints

Names:

National Museum of African Art (U.S.)

Geographic Names:

Africa  
Djenné (Mali)  
Gao (Mali)  
Mali  
San (Mali)  
Timbuktu (Mali)