New Waves 2017
At Virginia MOCA
January 28-April 16, 2017
**ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Born in Ethiopia, Dawit (pronounced da-wheat) N.M is a Norfolk-based photographer and director. Through his art he explores the Hampton Roads community and the people who live there. His documentary series, *Contour*, showcases area artists in short 2-3 minute videos. Another series, *The Hidden Branch*, explores the working class Portsmouth neighborhood of Southside Gardens, situated across the street from the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, where many of the residents are employed.

The photograph selected for New Waves 2017 is part of Dawit's *13 Months* series. The series documents Mekane Hiwot Abune Gebre Menfes Kidus and St. Arsema Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Norfolk, Virginia. This church is a small piece of home for area Ethiopians. It is the center for many weddings, holidays, and religious ceremonies. The name of this series, *13 Months* refers to the Ethiopian calendar, which has 13 months.

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**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What do you think is taking place in this picture? What in this image informs your idea of what is going on?
- Where do you think this event is taking place? Why?
- Where do you think the artist was standing to take this picture? What is his relationship to scene? An observer? A participant?

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**MINI LESSON**

- Dawit’s photograph captures a traditional wedding in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Think about your community, what event are held there? School rallies? Parades? Carnivals?
- With an adult, attend an event happening in your community. Bring a camera with you to document the event. What could you photograph to show others what the event is like?
- Share you photographs with your friends, family, or classmates.

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**RESOURCES**

- Teacher’s website.
- Interview with Dawit N.M in Mace and Crown: Old Dominion University Newspaper.
- Interview with Dawit N.M. on The Rebel Society website.
- Article about Dawit N.M. in RVA Magazine.

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**New Waves** is MOCA’s annual juried exhibition. Each year artist from around Virginia submit their work in hopes of being accepted into the exhibition. Over 300 artists submitted to New Waves 2017, with only 27 being accepted. Each year MOCA gets someone from outside Virginia to jury *New Waves*. This year Ken Harman, a San Francisco based gallerist, was our juror.