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# You Can Now Officially Listen To "Africa" On Repeat Forever Down In Africa



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Travel

*I cover travel: the places, the faces, the food, the suitcases.*



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Max Siedentopf in the Namib desert with his Toto Forever sound installation. MAX SIEDENTOPF

Apparently, I'm not the only one still listening to Toto's "Africa" on repeat.

[Max Siedentopf](#), a 27-year-old Namibian artist based in London, has created the ultimate tribute to the iconic song with a unique sound installation set up in – where else? – Africa.

If all goes according to plan, his Toto Forever installation will be playing "Africa" 24/7 in the middle of the Namib desert until the end of time.

I've just added this hidden destination to [my travel bucket list](#), and couldn't resist reaching out to Siedentopf – and [Toto](#), too.

Here's what the artist had to say about the song, the installation and the band's reaction:

**I just love everything about Toto Forever. Can you describe it for us, please?**

Thanks. I'm happy to hear that. Even though "Africa" by Toto was released 1982, it is still very much present in today's pop culture. I was intrigued by this and wanted to pay the song the ultimate homage by

physically exhibiting “Africa” in Africa. The Namibian desert – which, at 55 million years of age, is the oldest desert in the world – seemed to be the perfect spot for this. The sound installation consists of 6 speakers which are attached to an MP3 player that only has one song on it: Toto’s “Africa.” The song is put on loop and the installation runs on solar batteries to keep Toto going hopefully for all eternity.

**What gave you the idea for this?**

I liked the bad joke of playing “Africa” in Africa.

**How long did it take for you to figure out how to actually do the sound installation?**

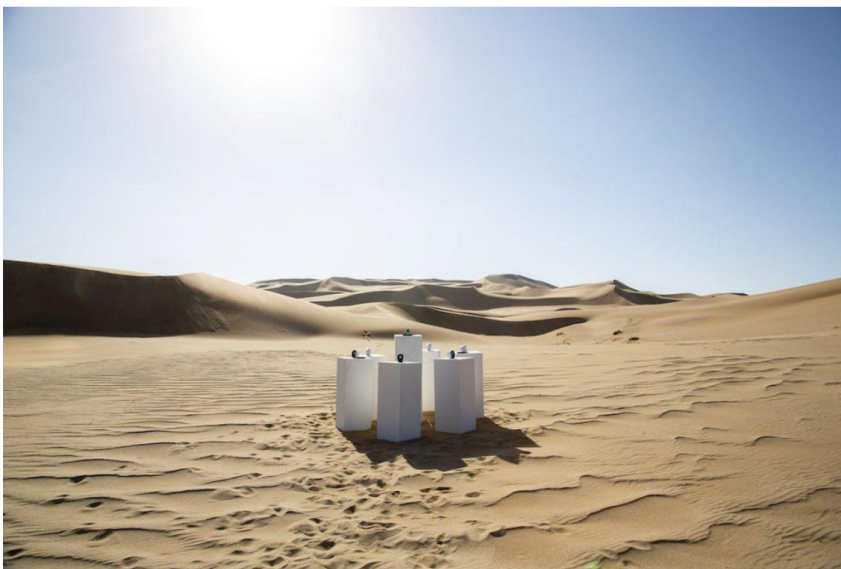
About half an hour.

**What’s your ultimate wish for Toto Forever?**

To keep it going, well, forever.

**How will it last “forever?” Won’t it run out of battery juice?**

When planning the installation, the biggest hurdle was, of course, the power part. Seeing as the nearest power outlet was at least 30km away, I had to come up with a different, more creative solution and decided to attach the sound system and mp3 players to a solar battery pack. If there’s one thing the desert’s got, it’s a whole lot of sun.



The Toto Forever sound installation in the Namib desert was designed to play "Africa" forever.  
MAX SIEDENTOPF

**What was the most challenging part of putting this together?**

Figuring out the logistics of it. I am based in London and went home to Namibia for two weeks. There are very limited supplies there so I had to take along a lot of things from London.

**What does the song itself mean to you?**

I think it perfectly captures the feeling of sitting out in the middle of

nowhere at a water hole, watching the wildlife, and it's the perfect song to listen to on a cold and dark day in London. Apart from that, "I miss the rains down in Africa" also resonates with me a lot because there's nothing more beautiful than rain in the Namibian desert.

### **Speaking of the rains in Africa, how will they affect your installation?**

The area I chose barely gets any rain. However, there are other elements like extreme sunshine, sandstorms and the harsh nature of the desert, in general, that will most likely devour the installation sooner than later.

### **As a Namibian, what do people in Africa think of the song?**

Even though the song "Africa" is from an American band – which, of course, brings some hypocrisies with it – I think Namibians love the song as much as the rest of the world. It's just a great song.

### **What is it about that song in general that has made it last and actually go through a whole new resurgence?**

That's a question I've been asking myself a lot recently. It might be because, in a time where we're surrounded by mumble rap and over produced pop hits, this song clearly stands out. However, even after having listened to the song for at least 400 times back to back, I'm still not sure why so many people love it and feel so connected to it. I think it just hits the right nerve.

### **How did you come up with the perfect location?**

I wanted to do it in the Namib desert because I think the sheer age of the desert is so incredible and works so well with this very "current" song. Other than that, I just drove around until I found some nice-looking dunes.

### **Why did you want to keep the location undisclosed? Do you think people will destroy it because the song is driving them crazy? Do you think fans will try to steal it?**

There is the risk of vandalism, but I prefer to see the sculpture as a treasure in the desert that only the most loyal Toto fan can find. The Namib desert is approximately the size of Switzerland and the Netherlands combined, so it might take a while.

### **Have you done other sound installations?**

No, this is actually my first one. My work is very much based on focusing on ideas and then finding the best suitable medium for it.

### **Are you planning other sound installations?**

I've already been asked what a sound installation would look and sound

like at the Grand Canyon or Antarctica, so who knows? Maybe I'll do another one. Probably I'll do another one.

### **What are you working on next?**

Most definitely my Toto "Africa" karaoke singing skills. I'm a creative partner of the international creative studio KesselsKramer so there are always a lot of projects going on. In my spare time, I'm currently working on a variety of new photo series, music videos and new book and magazine publications. I like to stay busy and have fun with my work.



Toto, whose hit song, "Africa," is now playing for all eternity in the Namib desert. SCOTTIE MOORE FOR SONY

### **What's been the reaction to Toto Forever so far?**

Overwhelming, to say the least. Friends from all over the world keep telling me that even their parents heard about it on the radio or TV and that the project is spamming their Facebook timelines. I personally think it's a bit ridiculous how far it went, but it's great to see that the whole world loves Toto.

### **Have you heard from Toto?**

No, I'm sure they are busy looking for the installation in the desert at the moment.

**Well, guess what? I reached out to Toto to see what they think of your creation, and here's what Steve "Luke" Lukather had to say: "Never in our wildest imaginations could we have ever foreseen such a thing. I mean, this is SO over the top! Our deepest thanks to the artist. Insane."**

I'm very happy they like it.

### **If Toto asked you to take them to the installation, what would you say?**

I would tell them that they would have to find it like someone else