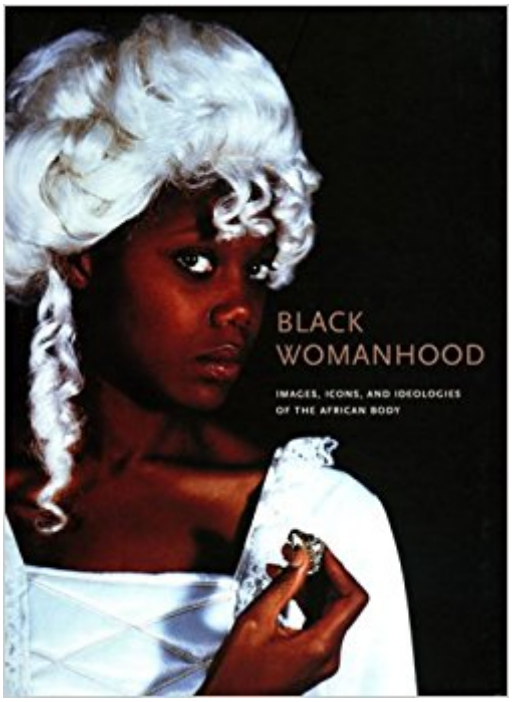
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Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, And Ideologies Of The African Body



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Synopsis

Explorations of contemporary art have focused on issues of identity and race for some time. Few, however, have sought to investigate these themes by juxtaposing historical and contemporary frameworks. Black Womanhood examines an especially charged icon--the black female body--and contemporary artists' interventions upon historical images of black women as exotic Others, erotic fantasies, and supermaternal Mammies.This book presents icons of the black female body as seen from three separate but intersecting perspectives: the traditional African, the colonial, and the contemporary global. The display and contemplation of such iconic images addresses complex and often competing forces of self-presentation and the representation of others. Peeling back layers of social, cultural, and political realities, Black Womanhood explores how historic icons inform contemporary artistic responses to the black female body through an examination of themes such as beauty, fertility and sexuality, maternity, and women's roles and power in society.More than 200 historical and contemporary images accompany written contributions by artists, curators and scholars. This compelling volume makes a valuable contribution to ongoing discussions of race, gender, and sexuality by promoting a deeper understanding of past and present readings of black womanhood, both in Africa and in the West.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Accompanying the eponymous exhibit at Dartmouth College's Hood Museum, this collection of essays is as richly insightful as it is beautifully produced. Eight contributors analyze representations of black women from separate but intersecting perspectives: the traditional African,

the colonial, and the contemporary global. Accessible essays and artist commentaries are interleaved among 128 color plates. Thompson's essay opens with the black female body on display in Europe and moves to the recovery of traditional African ideologies of womanhood, setting the stage for Ifi Amadiume's examination of traditional African art practices and Enid Schildkrout's demonstration of cross-cultural exchange. Investigating western colonizations and imaginings of black women, Kimberly Wallace-Sanders's analysis of representations of Mammy shifts the ground to the United States, and Deborah Willis considers how photographs from black family albums between the 1890s and 1940s countered racist images in popular culture. Thompson's closing meditation leads the reader back to the new, thought-provoking and often confrontational images of an empowered and outspoken black female presence at the heart of this exhibit. The originality of the images and interpretations make this catalogue essential to understanding how fully clothed the unclothed body truly is. (Apr.) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Rather than recycling the colonial approach to power and subjectivity, which defines the self through the ridicule of the other, Black Womanhood provides various textual, visual, and personal tactics that can contribute to re-imagining a more humane way forward."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Woman's Art Journal"Twenty years ago, Barbara Kruger coined her now-infamous slogan, 'your body is a battleground,' in a campaign to increase awareness of how women's bodies are marketed as commodities. Visually stunning and intellectually provocative, Black Womanhood resurrects that dialogue and complicates an embattled body in which blackness is a catalyst, surface, symbol, subject, and object that, while transformative on many levels, continues to appear alarmingly vulnerable to exploitation and stereotyping."Ã¢â ¬â ¢caa.reviews"A serious academic endeavor, suitable for scholars and the general public alike."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Book News"This collection of essays is as richly insightful as it is beautifully produced. . . . The originality of the images and interpretations make this catalogue essential to understanding how fully clothed the unclothed body truly is."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Publisher's Weekly

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