

THE HISTORY OF THE BLACK BODY HAS BEEN EXOTICIZED AND FETTERED IN A PORNOGRAPHIC FASHION

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The Black body historically and to this day has and continues to be eroticized in a violent pornographic fashion. Displayed in a crude and vulgar form, in galleries and museums - as if saying, 'it is art' warrants this attack on 'the black body'. These obscured obnoxious representation of our somatic features violate our dignity. In this degrading fashion what underlies these notions is a long colonial, racist oppressive, psychologically violent and violating narrative on the 'BLACK BODY'. It seems black bodies are only art when they feed into the notions of 'primitive', 'sexual', 'natives'. Thus woman are naked and bare and men and their gentiles are enlarged and exposed as opposed to their white counter parts who are dressed and seemingly dignified. These presentation falsely and crudely misrepresent the black narrative and further assimilates it into a colonial and racially fetishized narrative.

Saartjie Baartman, was put on display in Europe's freak show attraction as the Hottentot venus, Post mortem, her Genitalia, buttocks and brains were preserved by and in George Cuvier's laboratory at the Museum of Natural History- as he described 'Hottentots' as closer to 'great apes than human'. These notions were later used as scientific justification of the understanding of the 'savage' and white so called paternalism. Thus feeding into the colonial agenda to tame and civilise; physically, sexually,

morally, politically and spiritually the savage, being the black body and by extension Africa.

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We reject her presentation in the library, we reject that her standing naked commemorates her and retains her dignity. Further we see no difference in the racist, sexist methods used by the French and British in the freak show attraction than her presentation in the UCT Oppenheimer library. Thus we aimed to illustrate that the violent objectification and sexualisation of the black body is a system which feeds into the stereotype of racial superiority so subtly and insidiously it is hard to detect even by those bodies it represent in real life. So our aim is to challenge a history that represents us as a fetish, as a base sexual beings. There are Particular ways in which Saartjie Baartmans spirit and legacy can be contextualised and respected. Thus in our climatic end we Draped her and covered her hoping to show these violence's inflicted on the black body and psychology still continue and we will not stop until we **decolonise the black body and mind!**

