



177 Yinka Shonibare. *How Does a Girl Like You Get to Be a Girl Like You?* 1995.

178 Iké Udé. *Yellow Book #1*. 2003.

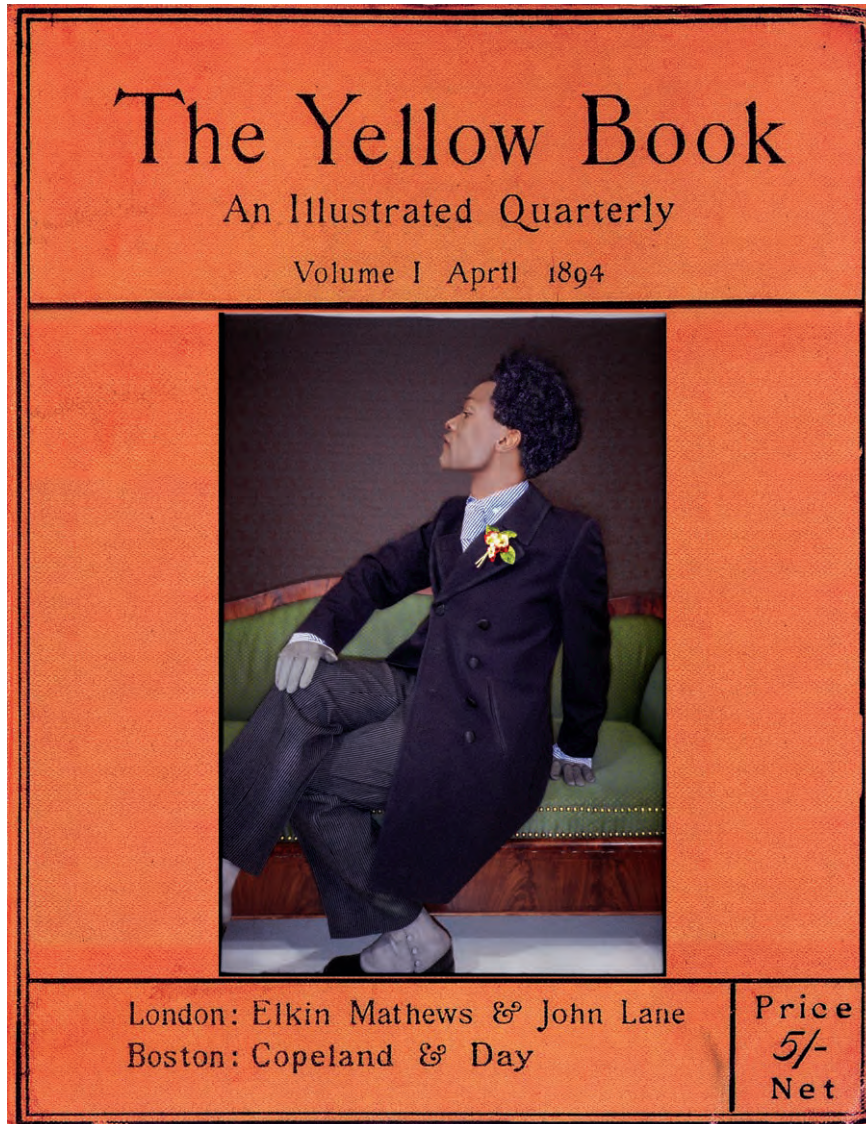
ropeans, who copied the signifier of bodily difference in the medium of clothing.³⁵

What makes Shonibare's hybridity double-edged, moreover, is that the circulatory model of traveling culture inscribed into his chosen fabrics also undermines the authenticity evoked in African American popular fashions of the 1960s, such as the dashiki. While Dutch wax print was used to signify identification with the African homeland, its hybrid history upsets separatist models of identity. "I'm a postcolonial hybrid," says Shonibare. "The idea of some kind of fixed identity of belonging to an authentic culture is quite foreign to my experience." He adds, "Is there such a thing as pure origin? For those of the postcolonial generation, this is a difficult question. I'm bilingual. Because I was brought up in Lagos and London—and kept going back and forth—it is extremely difficult for me to have one view of culture. It's impossible."³⁶

Iké Udé (b. 1964, Lagos, Nigeria) echoes such a viewpoint when he says, "I have found that, irrespective of ideological rhetoric, any strict adherence to a single cultural approach is flawed and practically impossible."³⁷ Producing photo-text work exhibited in gallery contexts along with magazine and website platforms that combine contemporary fashion with archival sections featuring a cross-cultural mélange of clothing styles, Udé staged photographic self-portraits in his *Cover Girl* series (1994), in which the artist inserted himself into simulacra of magazine covers, disclosing the impor-

tance of clothes to the self-fashioning of diasporic identities that stylize signifiers taken from disparate sources. When Udé portrays himself, in *Yellow Book #1* (2003), on the cover of the fin de siècle journal that published Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde, he performs a postcolonial translation of Charles Baudelaire's view that, as a transitory phenomenon of modernity, "dandyism is the last flicker of heroism in decadent ages."³⁸

In the modern-to-postmodern shift, cultural theorist Fredric Jameson observed that "depth is replaced by surface," when he described the expressive model of the modernist belief in the deep interiority of authentic selfhood as giving way to the play of pluralistic surfaces and simulacra that fashion identities from commodities in popular culture.³⁹ Where such postmedium artists as Shonibare and Udé contrast with painters in expressive figuration, it is a false choice to privilege one medium over others, since all strategies have altered the black image. But it is also misleading to think that the surface/depth distinction constitutes a conceptual dichotomy. The fabrics that clothed the epidermal surface of black skin were the superficial means by which black survival was enabled by "passing" and other modes of dissemblance. Moreover, in stylistic choices whereby black self-fashioning exploited expressive potentials in the medium of clothes and hair—from the 1940s' straightened conk and marcel wave to the crownlike 1960s Afro through to dreadlocks in the 1970s and the Jheri-curl in the 1980s



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—the presumption that style and substance are conceptually antithetical is subverted, since stylistic differencing expressed the substantive content of blackness in modes of self-fashioning that also articulated social and political dissent.

By the 1990s, the influence of the Black Atlantic concept helped inflect a distinction between earlier models of pan-African identity as a diasporic search for *roots* and a newer trope of the *routes*

through which identities are made and remade in circulatory networks of travel. While the roots/routes differential gives us a contrast, in a wide-angle view of the long twentieth century, between modernist conceptions of black identity as an authentic core of selfhood stemming from a unitary origin and postmodern views of decentered blackness in which identities are fabricated in language, discourse, and representation, it would be misleading to treat the



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matter as a static dualism. Process-oriented understandings of the mobility that signifiers gain once set loose from self-centering ideological systems such as Eurocentrism or Afrocentrism led to a radical break. The late twentieth-century moment in which the *post-* became ubiquitous resulted in what philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah characterized as a ground-clearing process that unsettled all that had been taken for granted in the grand narratives of the modern West.⁴⁰ In art, the vertiginous decentering of once-authoritative knowledge structures unsettled each of the binary pairings—original/copy, authentic/imitative, high/low, mass/individual, avant-garde/kitsch, tribal/modern—through which modernist epistemology had mapped its constitutive boundaries. But contrary to the all-or-nothing mind-set that feared chaos as the only logical alternative to hierarchical order, the decentering of modernism's value criteria resulted not in relativism but in a maelstrom of ongoing dialogue whose noisy multivoicedness exemplifies the discursive condition that the eminent Russian literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin referred to as *heteroglossia*.⁴¹

As the dialogical presence of black artists and other artists of color within the institutions of the art world transformed the discursive conditions under which categories of modernism and mo-

dernity were conceptualized and discussed, a newfound awareness of the circulatory mobility of images that travel across territorial borders placed the assumptions of primitivism “under erasure”—canceled out but still legible.⁴² The key concept in this regard was appropriation. It had begun its conceptual path in 1980s photo-text practices that transposed mass-media images from one context to another, but then it traveled into postcolonial studies. The concept showed that while the colonized were economically and politically dominated, they nonetheless exerted agency in what they appropriated and adapted and what they resisted and rejected in colonial discourse. As a result of the post-primitivist breakthrough, contemporary African art began to gain wider circulation in the 1990s, and this was presaged by rediscoveries of African portrait photography. Hitherto unseen in the archive because of the preference for tribal authenticity on the part of Western collecting practices,⁴³ the inventive agency exerted by photographer Seydou Keita (b. 1923, Bamako, Mali, d. 2001) revealed in his mid-twentieth-century Bamako portraits, such as *Untitled* (ca. 1956–1957), an image-world that had never been widely seen before. As his photographs traveled through journeys of decontextualization and recontextualization to be repositioned as art on Western gal-

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mounted on canvas. 289.6 × 342.9 cm. Chicago, Ill., The Art Institute of Chicago Max V. Kohnstamm Fund, 1995.147. Photography © The Art Institute of Chicago. © Kerry James Marshall.

169 Glenn Ligon. *Untitled (I Feel Most Colored When I Am Thrown Against a Sharp White Background)*. 1990. Oil on wood. 203.2 × 76.2 cm. New York, Luhring Augustine.

170 Byron Kim. *Synecdoche*. 1991–present. Oil and wax on luan, birch plywood, and plywood. 25.4 × 20.32 cm (10 × 8 in.) each. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art. National Gallery of Art, Richard S. Zeisler Fund.

171 Fred Wilson. *Cabinetmaking, 1820–1960*, from *Mining the Museum*. 1992. Installation view. Whipping post: date unknown, maker unknown; armchair, ca. 1896, maker unknown; side chair with logo of Baltimore Equitable Society, ca. 1820–1840, maker unknown; armchair, ca. 1855, by J. H. Belter; side chair, ca. 1840–1860, maker unknown. Baltimore, Md., The Contemporary Museum and Maryland Historical Society, 4 April 1992–28 February 1993. Photography courtesy the artist and Pace Gallery.

172 Renée Green. *Sites of Genealogy*. 1991. Installation view. Long Island City, N.Y., P.S.1 Contemporary Arts Center. Image: Tom Warren. Courtesy of the artist and Free Agent Media.

173 Whitfield Lovell. *Ode*. 1999. Charcoal on wood, chairs. 117 × 72 × 59 in. Image courtesy of the artist and DC Moore Gallery, New York.

174 Keith Piper. *The Rites of Passage, from A Ship Called Jesus*. 1991. Installation view. 35-mm slides in five carousels, sound. Birmingham, UK, Ikon Gallery.

175 Lubaina Himid. *Between the Two My Heart Is Balanced*. 1991. Acrylic on canvas. 150 × 120 cm. London, Tate Britain. © Tate, London 2013. Lubaina Himid.

176 Charo Oquet. *The Two Queens—Yemaya and Elizabeth I*. 1997. Acrylic on canvas. 121.9 × 142.2 cm. New Haven, Conn., private collection. Charo Oquet.

177 Yinka Shonibare. *How Does a Girl Like You Get to Be a Girl Like You?* 1995. Installation view. Mannequins, three costumes in Dutch wax fabric, tailoring by Sian Lewis Collection. © Yinka Shonibare MBE. All Rights Reserved, DACS 2014.

178 Iké Udé. *Yellow Book #1*. 2003. C-Print photograph. 27.9 × 21.6 cm. Courtesy of artist, Iké Udé.

179 Seydou Keita. *Untitled*. Ca. 1956–1957. Gelatin silver print. The Contemporary African Art Collection. Courtesy CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection. © Keita/SKPEAC.

180 Albert Chong. *I-Traits: Seated Presence*. 1992. Silver gelatin print. 101.6 × 76.2 cm. Albert Chong.

181 Rotimi Fani-Kayode. *Nothing to Lose IV*. 1989. Archival C-type print. 50 × 60 cm. Courtesy of Autograph, ABP. © Rotimi Fani-Kayode/Autograph ABP.

182 María Magdalena Campos-Pons. *Elevata*. 2002. Composition of

sixteen 24-by-20 Polaroids. Polacolor Pro. Edition of 2/2. Collection of Harvard Museum, Cambridge, Mass. Collection of The Indianapolis Museum of Art, Ind. @Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons—Collection of Harvard Museum Cambridge Mass—Collection of The Indianapolis Museum of Art Ind.

183 Alison Saar. *Bareroot*. 2007. Wood, bronze, ceiling tin, tar. 43.18 × 205.74 × 121.92 cm (17 × 81 × 48 in.). Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y. Charles Clifton Fund, by exchange, 2008. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA. © 2007 Alison Saar. Photograph by Tom Loonan.

184 Kara Walker. Detail of *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven*. 1995. Installation view. Cut paper on wall. Installation dimensions variable; approximately 396 × 1066.8 cm (156 × 420 in.). Installation view *Kara Walker: My Complement, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love*. Minneapolis, Walker Art Center, 2007. Photo: Gene Pittman. Artwork © 1995 Kara Walker.

185 Michael Ray Charles. *After Black (To See or Not to See)* and *Before Black (To See or Not to See)*. 1997. Acrylic, latex, stain, copper penny on paper. 152 × 91 cm (60 × 36 in.) and 152 × 95 cm (60 × 37 1/2 in.). Courtesy of the Artist and the Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York.

186 Chris Ofili. *Afro Love and Unity*. 2002. Oil, acrylic, polyester resin, glitter, map pins, elephant dung on linen with two elephant dung supports. 213.3 × 152.4 cm. Courtesy the Artist and Victoria Miro Gallery, London. © Chris Ofili.

187 David Hammons. *Rock Head*. 2004. Mixed media. 10 1/2 × 13 × 7 in. The Cartin Collection. © David Hammons.

188 Jeff Koons. *Michael Jackson and Bubbles*. 1988. Ceramic, glaze, and paint. 42 × 70 1/2 × 32 1/2 in. (106.68 × 179.07 × 82.55 cm). San Francisco, Calif., San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, purchased through the Marian and Bernard Messenger Fund and restricted funds. © Jeff Koons.

189 Janine Antoni. *Loving Care*. 1992. Dimensions variable. View of performance with Loving Care Hair Dye Natural Black at Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London, 1993. Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York. © Janine Antoni.

190 William Pope.L. *The Great White Way: 22 Miles, 9 Years, 1 Street*. (Whitney version #2). 1990. Video. Duration: 6:35 minutes. © William Pope.L. c/o Mitchell-Innes and Nash.

191 Nandipha Mntambo. *Narcissus*. 2009. 112 × 112 cm. Edition of 8 + 2AP. Photographic composite—Tony Meintjes © Nandipha Mntambo. Courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town and Johannesburg.

192 Ellen Gallagher. Detail of *DeLuxe*. 2005. A portfolio of sixty etchings with photogravure, collage, spit bite, cutting, scratching, hand building, silkscreen, offset litho. 33 × 26.5 cm (13 × 10 3/8 in.). © Ellen Gallagher. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

193 Wangechi Mutu. *Homeward Bound*. 2010. Archival pigment print