

Wangechi Mutu: Intertwined 2002, Watercolor with collage on paper 2021.115.6

United World College of the Atlantic, St. Donats, Wales
Parsons School of Design
Cooper Union BFA
Yale: masters in sculpture

“always been a city girl with a nature brain”

What visual things are intertwined?

Collage: fashion magazine cutouts (Vogue)
African wild dog/ African painted dog/ painted wolf; creatures admired for strength, power, stealth, courage (National Geographic)
Bra
Leggings on one behind
Strings of cut out
Ink
watercolor : texture makes you look longer
Photography dances behind her paintings

What ideas is she intertwining? Gender: exploring and subverting

Cultural preconceptions
Female body+ feminine
Western ideas of female sexuality: animal+ sexy
Ideal thin shapely female
Not much clothing
Stable stance

Worship image of woman but denigrate actual human woman

Unnerving/provoking

Alluring:exoticization of the black female body

Because of her upbringing at Catholic school: women, feminine energy, eternal source of nuns, girls, virgin mary

“All that is desired or despised “on the body of women

Race: animal: uses the energy of animals and plants in her work.

art history, When humans are animals= as old as the human mind. “ I wish I had the courage of”

the other is photographed and consumed/ impacted as colonized other
personal identity,

colonization: Europeans taught Christianized middle class Kenyans (70's and 80's when she was girl). History of photography and colonization grew and imparted "other" photographed and packaged and consumed. She sees herself as "colonized other"

Photography dances behind her paintings

African history not taught: the other is photographed and consumed/ impacted as colonized other