

Black beauty and Aesthetic Trauma

Presentation by Temi Odumosu

Temi Odumosu, researcher at Malmö University, is giving a presentation with different images showed to the audience on a widescreen.

Mother's milk

When showing an image of her mother, she tells:

– My mother used to make dolls. Somehow she protected us from visual violence. She made dolls representing different African tribes. These dolls were made for herself. But they were also for us, for the world, for many women to create a self, free from stigmatizing and stereotypes.

Colonial stigmata

An advertisement film of Nivea – Nivea Natural Fairness Body lotion is shown, that is promoted in the non-western market, especially in Nigeria.

– You may have noticed in the ad how the woman's skin is getting lighter when using the body lotion. Her daughter that you can see in the ad, is even lighter. The lotion will restore natural glow.... It will make you glow as a bride.

Anti-blackness

An image of Edmund Burke's anti-blackness text is shown, about what beauty consists of and Temi Odumosu says:

– Anybody who was a learned man could have access to this colonial material. There are a lot of examples, for example **Jonathan Troup**, physician, Aberdeen. Here he writes about a "mulatto woman in her morning dress". Her status as a **person** of mixed heritage gave her **slightly different** access **in the colonial hierarchy**.

19th century.

Examples are shown from art and paintings of that black people were never depicted for their beauty. Temi Odumosu has worked with late 19th to early 20th century photographs to find alternative stories. A quotation is picked from *Something Torn and New* by the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o: "The fragmentation of the African wholeness when the base is destroyed by colonialism".

Commodization of the body

Colonialism was marked by relations of domination. Colonization meant "thingification", as quoted by Aimé Césaire, philosopher, poet and psychiatrist from Martinique.

Report by : Karolina Jeppson