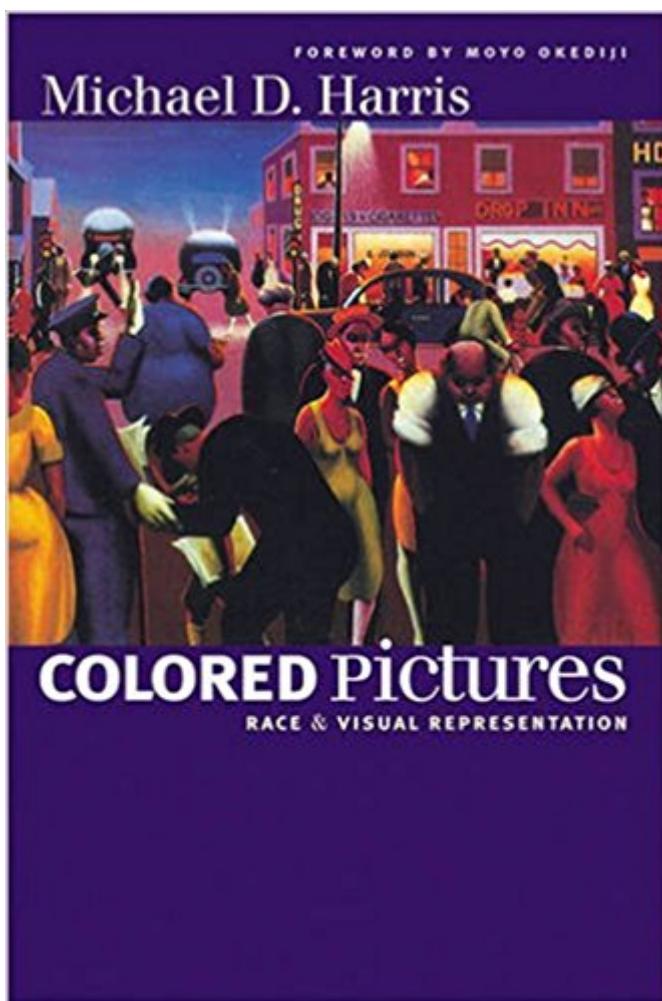


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# Colored Pictures: Race And Visual Representation



## Synopsis

In this book, artist and art historian Michael Harris investigates the role of visual representation in the construction of black identities, both real and imagined, in the United States. He focuses particularly on how African American artists have responded to--and even used--stereotypical images in their own works. Harris shows how, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, racial stereotypes became the dominant mode through which African Americans were represented. These characterizations of blacks formed a substantial part of the foundation of white identity and social power. They also, Harris argues, seeped into African Americans' self-images and undermined their self-esteem. Harris traces black artists' responses to racist imagery across two centuries, from early works by Henry O. Tanner and Archibald J. Motley Jr., in which African Americans are depicted with dignity, to contemporary works by Kara Walker and Michael Ray Charles, in which derogatory images are recycled to controversial effect. The work of these and other artists--such as John Biggers, Jeff Donaldson, Betye Saar, Juan Logan, and Camille Billops--reflects a wide range of perspectives. Examined together, they offer compelling insight into the profound psychological impact of visual stereotypes on the African American community.

## Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press; F First Edition edition (February 27, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0807856967

ISBN-13: 978-0807856963

Product Dimensions: 7.2 x 0.7 x 10.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #318,710 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #91 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Design #548 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Art History #1313 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Criticism

## Customer Reviews

"Highly recommended reading for anyone interested in the intersection of race and art in America." "Library Journal" "A lucid and thought-provoking investigation of the role of racial stereotypes in American art." "Black Issues Book Review" "Michael Harris has written the most comprehensive book ever published on the subject of race images." David C. Driskell, University of

Maryland" This needs to be read by anyone interested in African American studies, American studies, media studies, or the visual arts." Kenneth W. Goings, Ohio State University "The quality of thought and writing make [Harris's] analysis relevant to everyone connected to how slavery has inflected, and currently affects, Western visual art." "Print" "An important achievement in encouraging scholarly awareness about the depiction of minorities in contemporary art history. [Harris] does a commendable job of tracing the complex historiography of the subject matter in the United States." -- "H-AfrArts"

In *Colored Pictures*, Michael Harris approaches visual esthetics and race with a . . . combination of intellectual conviction and passionate intensity. The quality of thought and writing make his analysis relevant to everyone connected to how slavery has inflected, and currently affects, Western visual art. --Print Michael Harris's important study emerges at an opportune moment. With the debates that have revolved (and continue to spin) around the black figure in art and popular culture, *Colored Pictures* strikes a fresh, discerning chord. Its oppositional yet assentingly critical interrogations of past and present renderings of peoples of African descent are informed by history, cultural insights, and ethical considerations and provide an abundance of thought toward reevaluating racially limned identities in modern and contemporary art. --Richard J. Powell, Duke University Michael Harris has written the most comprehensive book ever published on the subject of race images, negative and positive, that examines the African American experience and its relationship to visual media. *Colored Pictures* presents a scholarly review of the painful experience of seeing race as a divisive tool by which artists of all media made a conscientious effort to denigrate and cast aspersions on an entire race of people. It should be read by all who wish to know the true history of racial representation in American culture. --David C. Driskell, University of Maryland Highly recommended reading for anyone interested in the intersection of race and art in America. --Library Journal *Colored Pictures* provides model scholarship for art historians and cultural critics. It is essential reading. . . . In addition to being scholarly, fascinating, and provocative, *Colored Pictures* is also a very beautiful book, richly illustrated, boldly designed, and printed to the highest standards. --African Studies Review Harris's *Colored Pictures: Race & Visual Representation* is a nuanced investigation of an area within art history that has proved difficult to articulate--much less to theorize. --Ethnic and Racial Studies Harris has written an exceptional book that goes beyond our traditional understanding of racially encoded images. He asks the reader to deconstruct the notion of race and then to see these racially codified images through new eyes. This book needs to be read by anyone interested in African American studies, American studies, media studies, or the visual arts. --Kenneth W.

Goings, Ohio State University An important achievement in encouraging scholarly awareness about the depiction of minorities in contemporary art history. [Harris] does a commendable job of tracing the complex historiography of the subject matter in the United States.--H-AfrArtsA lucid and thought-provoking investigation of the role of racial stereotypes in American art.--Black Issues Book Review

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As described and appreciated the quick delivery. Thank you.

Dr. Harris is an engaging, easy to read, writer with strong arguments. This book is great for anyone who wants to learn about this history of race via artistic/cultural representation. It begins by looking at white artists' depictions of African Americans and moves steadily into African American artists' work as the 20th c. progresses. He is a bit one-sided at times, for example in his criticisms of Kara Walker and Michael Ray Charles, but given his AfriCobra affiliation, that is not surprising. Even his criticisms of Charles and Walker are valid-- although I find their work to be just as important. Fascinating read which will introduce you to some lesser-known AfAm artists of the 20th c. Note that this is not a survey text with snippets on a vast number of artists. It is a critical book that works through themes in each chapter and delves into certain artists' careers in a more in-depth manner.

Great, used for my African American Diaspora Art History class. Learned a lot.....

The book is as intellectually stimulating as it is visually captivating. Anyone interested in giving serious thought to the history and power of images depicting persons of African descent should read this book. It's thoughtful and thought provoking. A topic that should interest any American, no matter what their race or ethnicity!

Excellent scholarship by Michael Harris. A sensitively written history of visual stereotyping and its effects. The book interweaves and points out the importance of Yoruba and other African philosophical heritages and their positive affects on artists, images in the U.S. Really excellent!!!!!!

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