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Reviewing the Arts Jour E-157

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October 10, 2019

200 word detailed description

TransAfrica. The black body transformed.

Noxholo poses with tentative sauciness, her body facing the camera as if it's a close friend. The result colorfully detonates ideologies and restrictive moral meanderings. In a country that ignores unspeakable violence against black bodies, images like these weave together necessary optimism. It's a good news story in a bad news place.

Sandro Miller coaxes out sex kittens and pensive gentlemen from his subjects, his camera alchemizing shame into shamelessness. Lee pouts brazenly in colorful geometric Swazi patterns and a woven hat. Kennedy is entrepreneurial, sitting in a midcentury pleather chair, smiling like a guy who owns a taxi fleet. Handsome Kabelo reprimands the staring viewer with a middle finger. Katlego serves polka-dot-realness and resting bitch face. Tshiamo is Tina Turner fierce: big hair, short dress, long nails, and kitten boots. Tommy blows smoke rings, his snug velvet suit barely containing his belly. Lindiwe's jeans look sprayed on, her new pearlescent breasts glistening under faux fur.

The TransAfrica exhibition captures insecurity dressed as joy while insisting on respect. Captured with child-like wonder, it exposes layers of otherness under constant threat of violence. Susan Sontag may view photography as manipulative, but here it creates vital, visual records of transformation after transition.

TransAfrica

Edelman Gallery 2019