

WANDA

Hit and run

How to love 'em and leave 'em first

It don't mean a thing,
If it ain't got no bling

Trick And Treat

Marriage

- Why it's NOT
the end all

Gloss
Vs.
Matte

Go Fly A Kite

Diva, Diva, Diva!

Burn Baby Burn!

Curl Up and Dye

25 ways to
get what you
deserve

Of course it's your hair —
you still have the receipt!

Find your inner Barbie

PLUM, AQUA, TANGERINE TURQUOISE, FUCHSIA, LEMON, KELLY

BLONDE

is the
new

Not Hood enough?

25 Ways to get Ghetto Fabulous!

Tom
Tom
Club

BLACK

Date a man with no job?!!

Too strong

Over my dead body!!

Are you a strong black woman?

How to marry a
Millionaire

Salon Days

Green-eyed
Monster

Find out in

Beauty Fact:

It's what's on the
OUTSIDE that counts

Know your worth!

25

questions

Phatty,
Phatty,
To Die for!

EWING

Bougie

WANDA
EWING

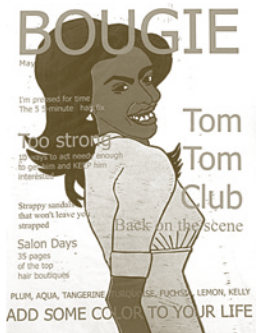
BY TIMOTHY SCHAFFERT



The women depicted in Wanda Ewing's artwork--whether armless, legless, or even headless; whether plump pinup girls proud in their rotundity, or dolls who are more than the sum of their missing parts, or magazine cover models breezily glorifying impossible standards--they all demonstrate a giddy indifference to their objectification, defying any interpretations other than the ones they choose to convey. See what you want to see, the women seem to be saying. You can't change who I am, they taunt.

Ewing portrays women in the act of posing, women possibly conscious of their degradation yet nonetheless seducing us with their self confidence. For Ewing's women, the beauty myth becomes just another beauty mark; politics likely seem silly to these cutie-pies. And yet the politics of fashion are what give Ewing's work its sinister and satirical bent. Just beyond the coy winks and the toothpaste-peddling smiles and curve-hugging skirts of these fine black women is the sense that the images aren't just about them. Caught up in it all is the photographer, or the art director, or the advertiser, or the porno-grapher, or the doll-maker, the various co-conspirators in the invention of glamour. All unseen, their shadows drop between us and the artwork, darkening the humors of the women on display.

In the *Bougie* magazine covers on exhibit here, and in her other work--from her comically romantic black pinup girls ("Black as Pitch, Hot as Hell") to incendiary drawings inspired by the bikini models of rap videos, the women strung up on puppet strings and with punching bags for heads ("The Video Grrrlzzz")--Ewing comments on American perceptions of sex and beauty, nodding toward Vargas, Barbie, Helen Gurley Brown, early 20th-century half dolls, and even R. Crumb and Andy Warhol. In Ewing's work, black women assert themselves into the commercial, white-centric iconography of prettiness, and the result is at times funny, at times sad, at times grotesque, but often charming. Her women rise above the didactic, each one becoming a character in her own right, in full control of her lovely image.



-TIMOTHY SCHAFFERT IS A NOVELIST AND JOURNALIST. HE SERVES AS A LECTURER IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN, AND IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEBRASKA SUMMER WRITERS' CONFERENCE.



Bougie - January, Reductive Linocut, acetate, vinyl letters, 22" x 30", 2006



Bougie - February, Reductive Linocut, acetate, vinyl letters, 22" x 30", 2007



Bougie - March, Reductive Linocut, acetate, vinyl letters, 22" x 30", 2007



Bougie - April, Reductive Linocut, acetate, vinyl letters, 22" x 30", 2007



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