Abstractionist Aesthetics: Artistic Form and Social Critique in African-American Culture (Hardback)



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Reviews

This kind of publication is every little thing and taught me to looking ahead of time and a lot more. It is packed with wisdom and knowledge Once you begin to read the book, it is extremely difficult to leave it before concluding. (Ida Herman)

ABSTRACTIONIST AESTHETICS: ARTISTIC FORM AND SOCIAL CRITIQUE IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURE (HARDBACK)

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New York University Press, United States, 2015. Hardback. Book Condition: New. 229 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. In a major reassessment of African American culture, Phillip Brian Harper intervenes in the ongoing debate about the proper depiction of black people. He advocates for African American aesthetic abstractionism-a representational mode whereby an artwork, rather than striving for realist verisimilitude, vigorously asserts its essentially artificial character. Maintaining that realist representation reaffirms the very social facts that it might have been understood to challenge, Harper contends that abstractionism shows up the actual constructedness of those facts, thereby subjecting them to critical scrutiny and making them amenable to transformation. Arguing against the need for positive representational aesthetics, re-centers literature as a principal site of African American cultural politics, and elevates experimental prose within the domain of African American literature. Drawing on examples across a variety of artistic production, including the visual work of Fred Wilson and Kara Walker, the music of Billie Holiday and Cecil Taylor, and the prose and verse writings of Ntozake Shange, Alice Walker, and John Keene, this book poses urgent questions about how racial blackness is made to assume certain social meanings. In the process, African American aesthetics are upended, rendering abstractionism as the most powerful modality for Black representation.

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