



FRIDAY, 9 APRIL 2010

~The Jack of All Trades~ Iké Udé

*Born in Lagos, Nigeria, Iké Udé is an **artist, writer and publisher** of New York-based **aRUDE** magazine. After studying in Nigeria and America, Udé started his artistic career as a painter in the late 1980s. In the early 1990s, he began using **photography** to explore and deconstruct issues of representation and identity. His research engages him to use different forms of mass communication including magazines, television and film. This man is a **true artist** with a vast amount of fantastic work under his belt. I could not choose what to centre this post around so i decided to do snippets of what i consider to be my favorite from his **eclectic collection of work**. He has been featured on *Vanity fair's* best dressed list and has published his very own Style File featuring 'the world's most elegantly dressed'.*



The installation was inspired by Ude's work; 'Beyond Decorum'. It featured two contradicting images of Kibardin posing in a classic grey suit and six pairs of men's shoes in see-through PVC. While the techniques employed to make the embroideries and the footwear are conceived in this installation as a sort of hymn to craftsmanship, the shoes themselves are used to break the stereotype that sees men's footwear as smart and elegant but not necessarily sexy. Ordinary shoes are therefore turned into fragile and theatrical art pieces that suggest an outward/inward dichotomy and eventually reveal the wearer's most secret and genuine essence. I think these shoes are **beyond fabulous** and so creative its simply, **genius**.

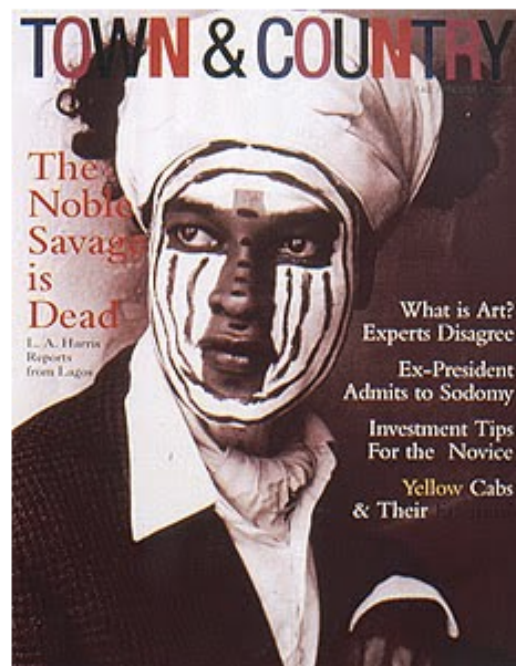






When i first came across Udé's "Cover girls" I thought he had been featured on the Vogue, Cigar Afficionado, GQ and all the other fabulous magazines. But after some research I found out the covers are a series of fabricated magazine covers, with a deep rooted critique. In the series "Beyond Decorum" Udé creates a visual document for a cultural absence. Similarly, here Udé becomes the 'covergirl' gracing the cover of Cigar Afficionado as a black man in dramatic drag make up and on Parenting as a black baby on a walk with his white nanny. While Udé's identity changes from cover to cover the monotony of the traditional upper-class white cover model becomes apparent. The "Covergirl" series recalls many historical influences from Andy Warhol's multi-media, pop art fascination with the creation of celebrity and more recently Cindy Sherman's use of costuming to explore the cultural icons and stereotypes of women. There is something about Ude's perception of art that is oddly refreshing, individual and distinct. It's art like i've never seen before and i think thats why i love it so much!

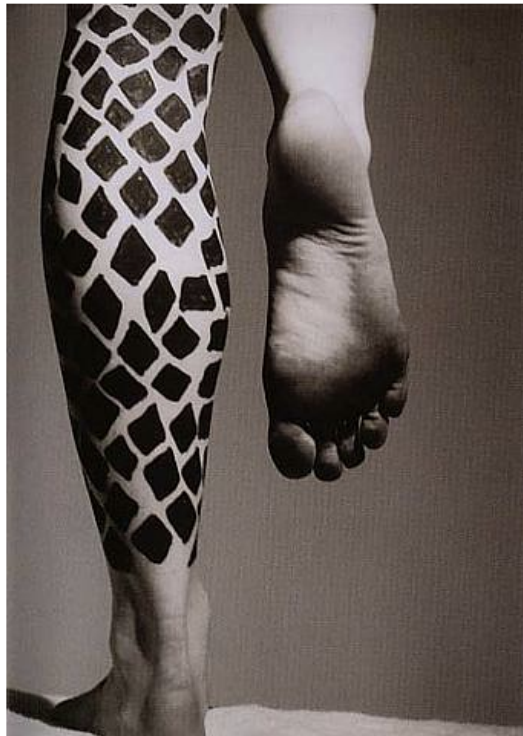
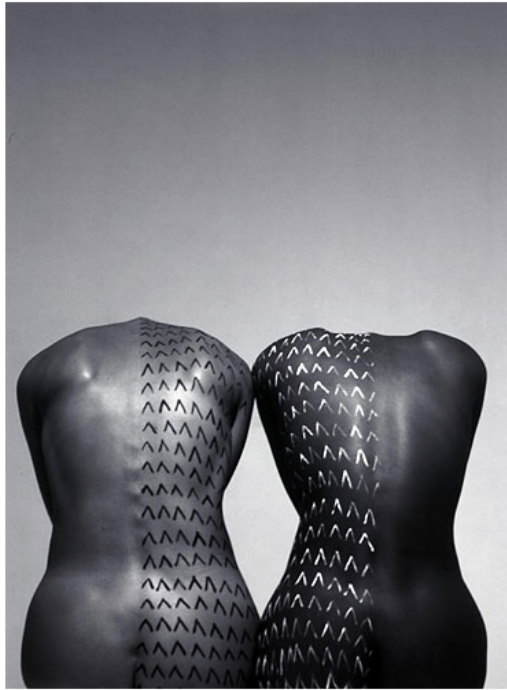






In his Uli series, Udé creates compelling, lyrical images that capture the elegance of high fashion and the anonymity of the inscribed and disembodied self. The work below is inspired by Ude's Igbo background by recalling the body motifs of uli, a woman's art form. His photographs portray his love for light and shadow, the interrogations of identity and the body & the interplay between form and script.





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