

studied, as different tables presented different numbers. In the chapter on women's mobility, I would have liked to understand precisely how geographic location, transportation options, and access to capital intersect in determining women's success or failure in the informal economy. Are there links between place of residence and access to capital? Do women who use matatus (minibus taxis) fair better than those that walk? Finally, the concept of the "African indigenous market," which is referred to throughout as an inclusive and resilient form of economic activity, seemed unproblematic and somewhat romantic as a catch-all strategy for overcoming the exclusivity of modern capital. Given the author's extensive data, the conclusion could have pushed the boundaries a little more—offering bolder recommendations and making a stronger theoretical contribution to the study of informality in Africa's growing cities. Still, this is an important and essential book for scholars interested in urbanization in Africa.

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doi:10.1017/asr.2015.91

Victoria L. Rovine. *African Fashion, Global Style: Histories, Innovations, and Ideas You Can Wear*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. viii + 315 pp. Acknowledgements. Notes. Bibliography. \$40.00. Paper. ISBN: 978-0253014092.

Fashion is generally associated with the commercial system of clothing production driven by rapid change and novelty in the West. Such a narrow view turns African fashion designers into passive imitators of styles originating in the metropolises of modernity. This meticulously researched, richly illustrated, and very readable book about African fashion design and designers, and the global circulation of style, turns such assumptions on their head. *African Fashion, Global Style* is a timely addition to an emergent body of critical fashion scholarship that works to decenter the canon of Western fashion by deprovincializing the African continent as a fashion-producing region. Victoria Rovine masterfully shows how African fashion cycles have been driven historically by ongoing innovation and change, as well as a constant reinterpretation and negotiation of various external influences. In addition to tracing these cross-cultural influences and inspirations, Rovine is interested in colonial and postcolonial discourses about Africanisms in global fashion. It is this intersection that makes this book such an innovative contribution to the literature on African visual cultures, design, and fashion.

The fashion stories that make up the book draw predominantly from the author's research on professional designers in Mali, South Africa, and Paris, with a few examples from Nigeria and Ghana. As an art historian, Rovine is careful not to generalize from these specific locations and "case studies" as she meticulously analyzes designer biographies, garments, techniques, styles, and fashion markets. The introduction provides an

excellent overview of past and current scholarship on African dress, fashion, and design, which students of African art history, visual culture, and fashion will find especially useful. The author pays close attention to history, and skillfully troubles the line between the “traditional” and the “modern,” two dominant categories that continue to shape the politics and discourses of the Western fashion world.

Written with great clarity and carefully organized, each of the five chapters takes up one thread of the author’s overview of African design innovations in the global fashion market. The first chapter lays out what the author calls “indigenous fashion,” by which she refers to design innovations that draw inspiration from various regions, histories, and economies without reference to the global fashion system. She makes this point through a detailed description of two distinct styles of embroidered tunics that men wear in Mali, and whose sartorial innovations draw on the aesthetic of Bollywood in one case and the regional iconography of West African Islam on the other. The next chapter, entitled “African Style in French Fashion,” gives a fascinating account of how French designers invented an African aesthetic from the early twentieth century onward. In a veritable tour de force, Rovine discusses the influence of colonial exhibitions on French artists and designers and shows how these influences translated into French haute couture, from the designs of Paul Poiret via Yves Saint-Laurent, to those of Jean-Paul Gauthier. The visual legacy of an imagined, mythical, and static “Africa,” composed of animal skins, colorful beads, bright patterns, and various decontextualized forms, which Rovine calls “Africanisms,” has ongoing currency in the haute couture fashion system today.

In chapters 3 and 4 Rovine makes an analytical distinction between what she calls “classical African fashion” and “conceptual African fashion.” Drawing on examples from African designers on the continent and in the diaspora (Paris), she describes how those reinventing local materials and forms with specific references to the past create classical African design. By contrast, she considers designers whose creations only implicitly invoke African forms and histories, garments that have no “recognizable stylistic references” (158) to African cultures but are imbued with an emotive quality that references African design. To support this analytical distinction—which Rovine uses to counter the problematic dichotomy between traditional and modern—she provides a host of richly illustrated examples of these two types of design. The last chapter, which focuses exclusively on South African fashion, details how, on one hand, the signifiers of postapartheid South Africa came to draw upon local materials (namely, the printed *isishweshwe* cloth, or *shweshwe*), and how, on the other hand, a series of street-style fashion labels use recycled materials to restitch complex claims to citizenship and belonging in postapartheid South Africa. The book concludes with an analysis of fashion discourse in journalism, magazines, advertisements, and fashion shows which skillfully connects these discursive regimes to the wider relations of power and systems of authority that ultimately determine what is labeled African fashion and what is not.

While this book does not pretend to be exhaustive in scope, and deliberately offers highly selective case studies and thematic angles on fashion design, scholars of gender will regret that the gendered politics of fashion, both in production, discourse, and use, is not further problematized. It is specifically female bodies that are showcased in various states of dress and undress throughout the book's rich visual material, and although Rovine, in her analysis of French fashion, offers an excellent discussion of how the female body works as a site of colonial desire and sexualized "otherness," gender drops out of the book's broader analytical framework. Similarly, the book's focus on production and discourse elides further discussion of the critical role of consumption, the driving force behind production. Who wears these exclusive designs? How do the styles of "classical" and "conceptual" designers such as Xuly Bet, Ndiaga Diaw, Ben Nonterah, or MaXhosa cycle down into popular street fashion, and how does street style cycle up into "conceptual" design? Nevertheless, this richly illustrated and well-written book is a wonderful and important addition to the study of African fashion scholarship, and it will appeal to a wide audience.

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doi:10.1017/asr.2015.92

Jan Bender Shetler, ed. *Gendering Ethnicity in African Women's Lives*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015. ix + 348 pp. Bibliography. Index. \$55.00. Paper. ISBN: 978-0299303945.

This groundbreaking collection of essays is organized around the core question of how women's gendered practices contribute to the construction or subversion of ethnicity. By analyzing gender and ethnicity as mutually constitutive social practices that develop in tension and dialogue with each other, this volume provides incontrovertible evidence that everyday struggles between women and men over household production, ritual expression, and political and economic authority, for example, are not tangential to, but at the heart of, the process of formation and articulation of ethnic identity.

The eleven richly nuanced chapters that make up this volume focus variously on case studies of women who affirmed a particular form of gendered ethnicity (Poppy Fry, Jill Kelly, Wendy Urban-Mead, Ndubueze Mbah) or subverted or marginalized ethnicity as the central component of their own identities (Jan Bender Shetler, Meghan Healy-Clancy, Ethan R. Sanders, Heike Schmidt). At times, ethnicity was utilized as social capital to be drawn on to promote certain agendas (Heidi Gengenbach); at other times, it was eschewed as irrelevant to the goals women sought to accomplish (Sanders). Women appear in these pages as boundary crossers and alliance makers