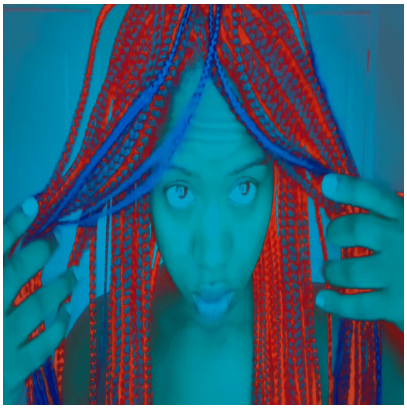
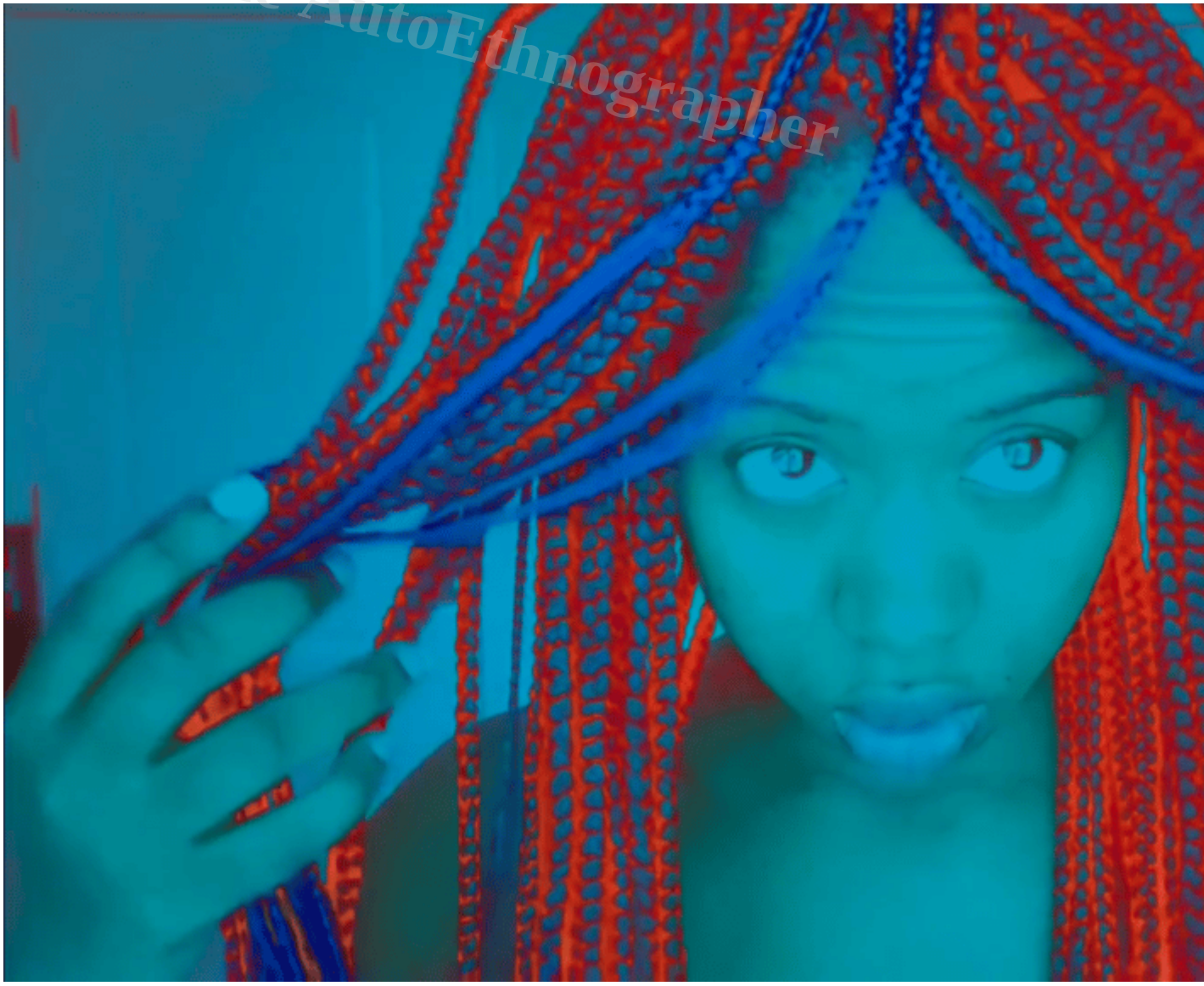
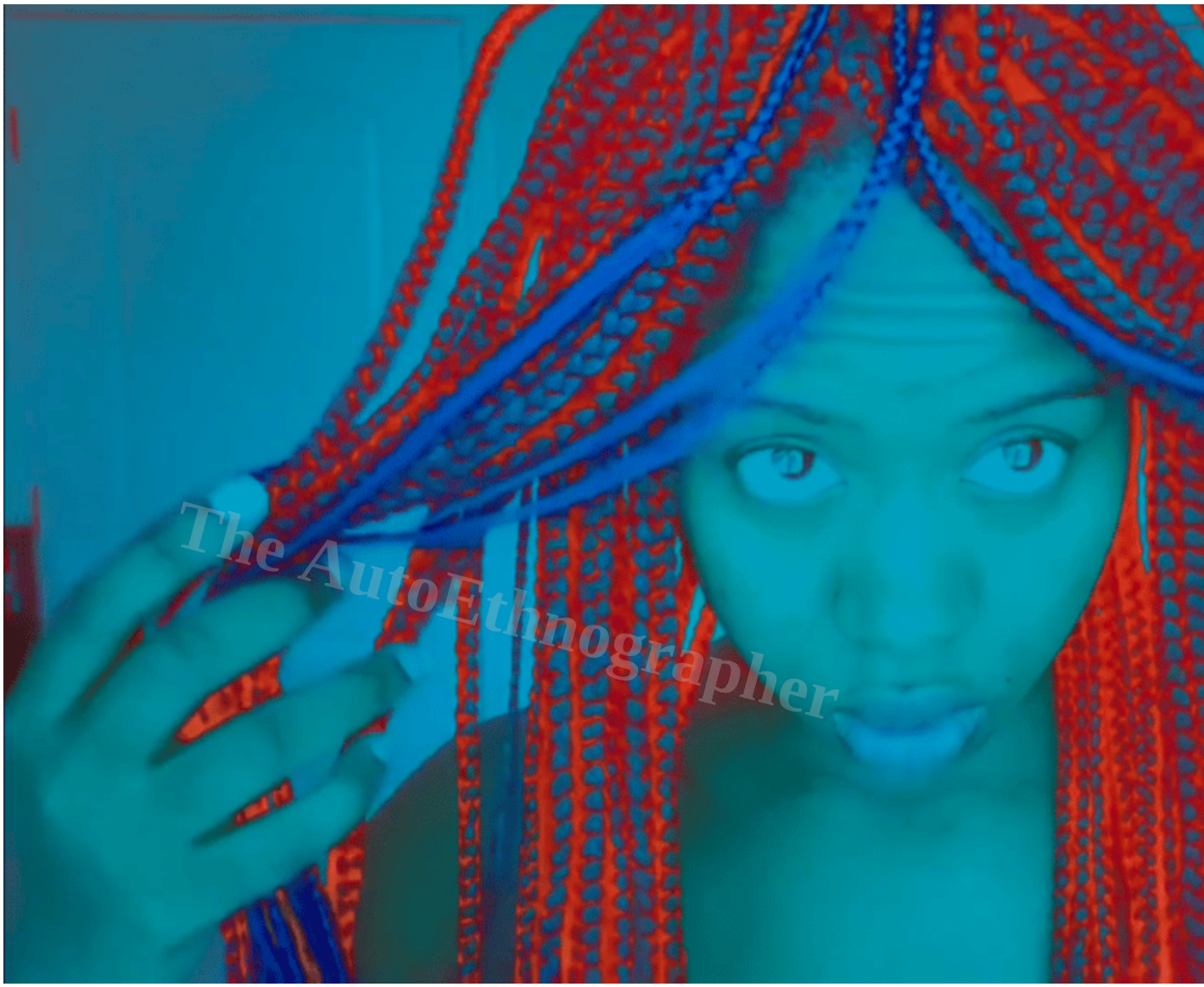


The Twerking Academic on Black Hair: How Deep Is Your Love?

Description

The AutoEthnographer





The Twerking Academic on Black Hair: How Deep Is Your Love?

This piece explores the ways in which identity and esteem are interwoven into the topic of Black hair while also probing my own level of sentimental detachment. Within the past decades, many Black women have embraced the process of going natural and regard natural hair as a symbol of pride and self-love. So then, confessing that I do not share the same level of reverence during this heightened period of enlightenment and acceptance seems blasphemous. For me, hair is more aesthetic than symbolic. Hair is playful. It is a costume, an accessory.

To clarify, I am not dismissing the significance of Black hair on the social, historical, and cultural level, particularly in the face of Senate Republicans blocking the Crown Act in December of 2022. Truthfully, the original intent of the piece WAS to pay homage and shed light on the Black hair journey and struggle. But, somewhere in the middle of my carefully measured intentions to have a culturally responsible and illuminating conversation, I stumbled upon the reality of my own lackadaisical, whimsical outlook. This video piece is the product of intention meeting reality.

> â??Well, I would say that hair is a womanâ??s glory and that you share that glory with your family, and they get to see you braiding, and they get to see you washing it, and they get to see youâ??itâ??s a glory. But itâ??s not a bad thing or a good thing. Itâ??s hair.â?• ~ Maya Angelou (Stilson, 2009, 0:03:13)

How Deep Is Your Love?

MORE FROM THE TWERKING ACADEMIC

The AutoEthnographer

The Twerking Academic: Visual Exploration of Black Womanhood

The Twerking Academic is dedicated to exploring the multilayered lived experience of Black womanhood using multimodal autoethnographic expression. Column installments include an audiovisual piece that focuses on exploring, processing, and communicating meaningful personal experiences that also offer a voice to the experiences of the wider cultural community. Audiences can view each audiovisual piece independently. A written memo supplements each piece explaining context and speaking to significant themes within the work. Themes explored include bodily autonomy, stereotypes, mental health, and the experience of the Black female academic.

The Twerking Academic seeks to probe and question the established idea of what constitutes an academic. It examines the prescriptive, limiting rules that often dictate how one is recognized as an academic by the community. The column title itself is a nod to this goal. It prompts audiences to reexamine preconceived notions surrounding respectability politics and scholarship. In addition, engaging with topics in an inclusive manner that transcends past barriers that have separated the academic and general population is fundamental to the columnâ??s working mission. I hope this column encourages members of the BIPOC community to build spaces that are authentically reflective of their personal style, culture, and preferred method of communication, and promote multimodal/audiovisual autoethnography as a viable investigative method.

Excerpt from 2022 video interview with Renata Ferdinand and Shanita Mitchell:

â??For black women, I definitely want them to see themselves, because we donâ??t see ourselves often. And I want to see and show us as weâ??re complicated, weâ??re multifaceted, weâ??re multilayered. Weâ??re not just the strong black woman or the angry black woman or the hypersexualized. I want the world to know. Weâ??re complicated and face many battles which the world canâ??tâ?¦. They kind of know, but like, sometimes you really just have to breakdown what these battles are for them. So, I just want us to be like, â??I see myself.â?• And then everyone else to be like, â??Oh wow, OK, so this is whatâ??s happening to black women.â?• Because itâ??s happening, and weâ??re here. READ MORE

The AutoEthnographer

References

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Featured image by Shanita Mitchell

Category

1. All Content
2. Autoethnographic Art & Multimedia
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