



Artifacts taken from the African continent. These pieces are found in the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. It houses an extensive collection of artifacts and artwork from Africa. This museum can serve as a valuable resource for the public to see authentic elements of various African cultures, especially African Americans who have been historically barred from practicing and learning about these cultures. However, what are the ethics of housing these artifacts outside of Africa, away from the people that created them? Were these pieces acquired ethically or were they stolen by archaeologists?



This is in contrast to images here which show the empty space left by an artifact that was returned to the group/country from which it came



Depictions of African Americans created by non-Black creators. What happens when images of Black people are created by people who aren't Black? What are the intentions of said creators? If the images depict real Black people, were they able to consent? Here we have a wide range of depictions, from racist stereotypical imagery to photographs that challenge US mainstream conceptions of Africa, to a memorial for a prominent Black activist who was assassinated by the very government that is commemorating him.

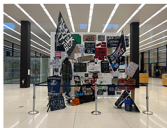
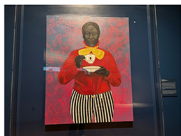


Art from the African Diaspora

Abstract: While traveling to Washington D.C. on the Black Educultural Connections Trip with the Black Cultural Center, I noticed the abundance of Black art in the city. From massive murals painted on the walls of buildings throughout the urban landscape to artifacts curated at the Smithsonian Museum of African Art, the city is a haven for Black artistic expression. However, with the history of racism imbedded in US institutions, this abundance invokes questions of ownership, freedom of expression, agency, and power. Who commissioned or authorized the art, and what is the significance of their subject matter? What art is considered acceptable, to whom and why? What are the connections between the art of Black American artists and that of African artists? Is there a difference between art by Black folks, art that features Black folks, and art for Black folks? After exploring the city and taking hundreds of pictures over the course of four days, I have selected twenty that explore the complexity of these questions.



Artwork created of Black people by Black people for Black people. These pieces were captured from various museums. What is the difference between art created by Black people and art created of Black people? what common themes show up in this art? How are the subjects depicted?



What is art? These are pieces created for political and emotional purposes, depicting messages about gun violence and police brutality. They were created by and for Black people and discuss issues that Black people face as a community. Are these pieces considered art? What are the limits to what can and cannot be considered art and what are the implications of those limits?



Murals found around the city of DC depicting key aspects of Black (and Latine) culture as well as key Black figures of history. It is unclear who created these murals, whether they were Black artists, but they assuredly would have to have approval from, or might have even been commissioned by the city, or at least the owners of the buildings. This begs the question of what role public and private institutions play in sanctioning what images of Black people are allowed to be depicted, what messages are allowed to be sent to the public, and who is allowed to do the artwork.