



The Black Track

Office of African American Affairs

THE VERSATILITY OF BLACK WOMEN'S HAIR: HAIR TALES

Choose your hair, wear it any way

On October 22, 2022, the six-part series "The Hair Tales" was released in the United States. This series was executive produced by Tracee Ellis Ross, Oprah Winfrey and created by Michaele Angela Davis. These three Black women who know the industry and hair representation. (TV Series 2022–, n.d.) The production team in the series was predominantly African American. In the series, Black women share their entwined stories of hair and identity. As a Black woman in America, hair identity is almost inevitable. In this article, we hope to bring awareness to the series and how it addresses the importance of realistic representation in Hollywood and the world.

For years, the primary representation of beauty in America has been based on Eurocentric views. Eurocentrism is centered on Europe, reflecting a tendency to interpret the world in terms of European or Anglo Saxon-American values and experiences. ("Eurocentric," n.d.) Some of us have heard the phrase, "If it isn't white, it isn't right." Historically, the representation across all categories has not been Black people. Fortunately, this lack of accurate representation is changing, especially in entertainment.

From 2019 to 2020, about 26% of Black women were characters in broadcast network programs, which is a higher percentage than the 12% from 2010 to 2011. Additionally, in 2020, 50% of the fashion magazines displayed models of color, a massive rise from 17.4% in 2014. (How Eurocentric Beauty Standards Harm Black Women, 2021)



"I'm a Black woman who loves hair. I enjoy changing my hair, having fun with it- just hair! I go from braids, to weaves, to wigs, to natural hair"

Tasha Smith

Article Reference



@oaaanewmexico



@nm_oaaa



oaaa.state.nm.us



@nm_oaaa



The Black Track

Office of African American Affairs

THE VERSATILITY OF BLACK WOMEN'S HAIR: HAIR TALES

Continued.....

Although there is still more work to be done, more Black women are showing up in these spaces as themselves. Tracee Ellis Ross said, "Growing up, society told me there was a right way to wear my hair, and a right way to look." Series like "The Hair Tales" allows us to see Black women as themselves in society and entertainment.

The series consists of interviews with Marsai Martin, Issa Rae, Oprah Winfrey, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, Chika, Milah Dee, and Chloe Bailey. These Black women are sharing their hair journey stories and representing the next generation. They each had different hair styles, that felt natural to them. They changed the notion that our hair doesn't have to look one way, and it most definitely does not need to follow Eurocentric views. The executive director states: "Every Black woman has a personal and defining story that involved her hair." In my experience, this is also true.

The societal norm of what beauty looks like is changing and legislation, such as *The Crown Act*, is protecting Black women's right to be themselves in public spaces. Currently, the Crown Act sits within the Senate, awaiting approval. During this period, we must reflect upon why the act is required in the first place. No longer will Black women be concerned about the natural texture of their hair disqualifying them from employment. As Black women, we won't be penalized for not naturally fitting into the Eurocentric look. In conclusion, the Office of African American Affairs hopes you can watch "The Hair Tales" and, even more proudly, walk around in society with your hair out.



"I'm a Black woman who loves hair. I enjoy changing my hair, having fun with it- just hair! I go from braids, to weaves, to wigs, to natural hair"

Tasha Smith

Article Reference



@oaaanewmexico



@nm_oaaa



oaaa.state.nm.us



@nm_oaaa