

“Sade Girls Making Thirst Traps to Pearls;

**Multiracial Truths
Turned Marketable
Trends”**

Zoë Walkenhorst

Sade Adu is a Nigerian-British jazz singer.

her song was one of the most popular sounds on Tik Tok in 2024.

There is a woman in Somalia
Scraping for pearls on the roadside
There's a force stronger than nature
Keeps her will alive

This is how she's dying
She's dying to survive
Don't know what she's made of
I would like to be that brave

She cries to the heaven above
There is a stone in my heart
She lives a life she didn't choose
And it hurts like brand new shoes

♥♥ PEARLS ♥♥



white audiences want to know...

**will it sell?
is it sexy?**

**Sade sings with reverence about a
fictional woman who personifies
the 1992 Somali famine .**

**does it sound foreign,
far-off and new?
where can i buy it?**

Stories of pain, hardship and experience
have long been told by artists of color
and just as long been consumed by white
audiences. These oral histories were
created for communion and taken for
commodity.

How has performing ethnic
ambiguity re-entered
the trend cycle through
multiracial artists?

HOW many times
do we have to
sing
say
scream

culture is NOT skin deep....!./

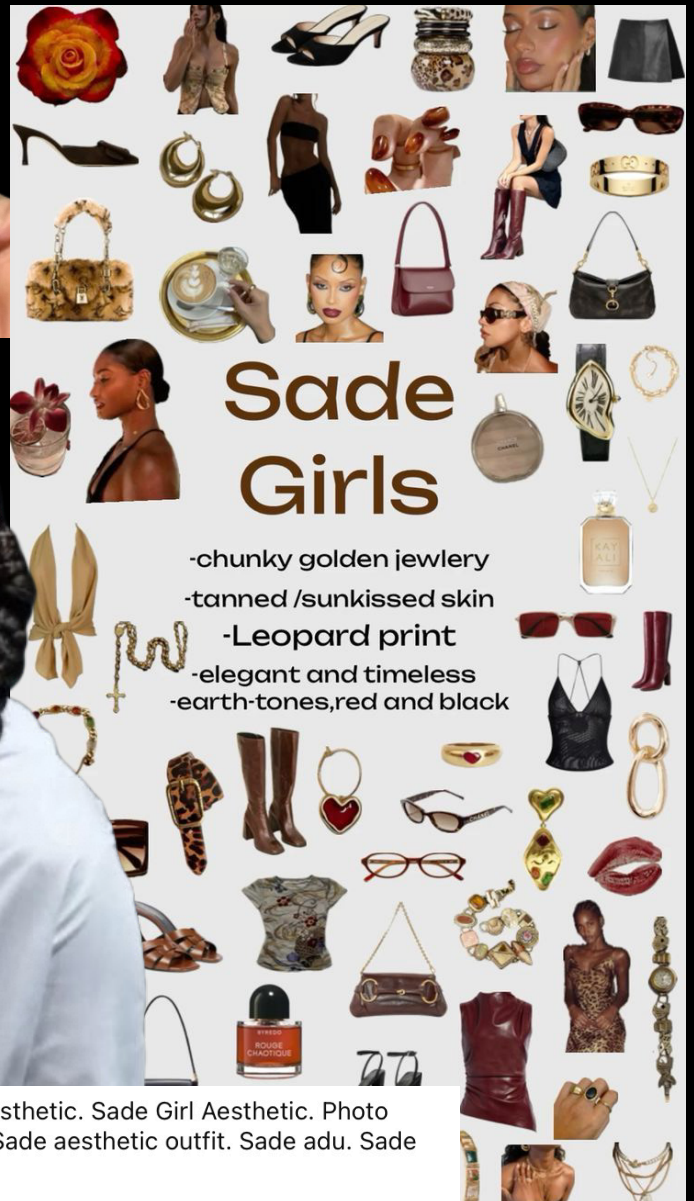


the phenomenon

"SADE GIRLS"

the social media
commodification of WOC
features and beauty
practices

gelled hairstyles. gold
jewelry. full lips. large hoop
earrings. tan skin. jazz club
aesthetics.



Sade Girl. Sade. Sade Aesthetic. Sade Girl Aesthetic. Photo
inspo. Aesthetic. Inspo. Sade aesthetic outfit. Sade adu. Sade
style. Fashion.
... less

TikTok
© muriel.gmiranda

Sade Girls outfits

they want to look like you! you should be flattered!

just as monoracial people of color experience uncomfortable and often violent racialization, biracial/multiracial people whose racial makeup is (white +other) experience a similar harmful social categorization with the additional nuance of their phenotypical proximity to whiteness.

White spectators of these racial dynamics take interest in the gray area of mixed peoples. Some see multiraciality as a playing field for their own desires to deviate from WASP popular culture; These people take multiracial parties' unique social positioning as racially fluid to perform outside of their race. Let's call this

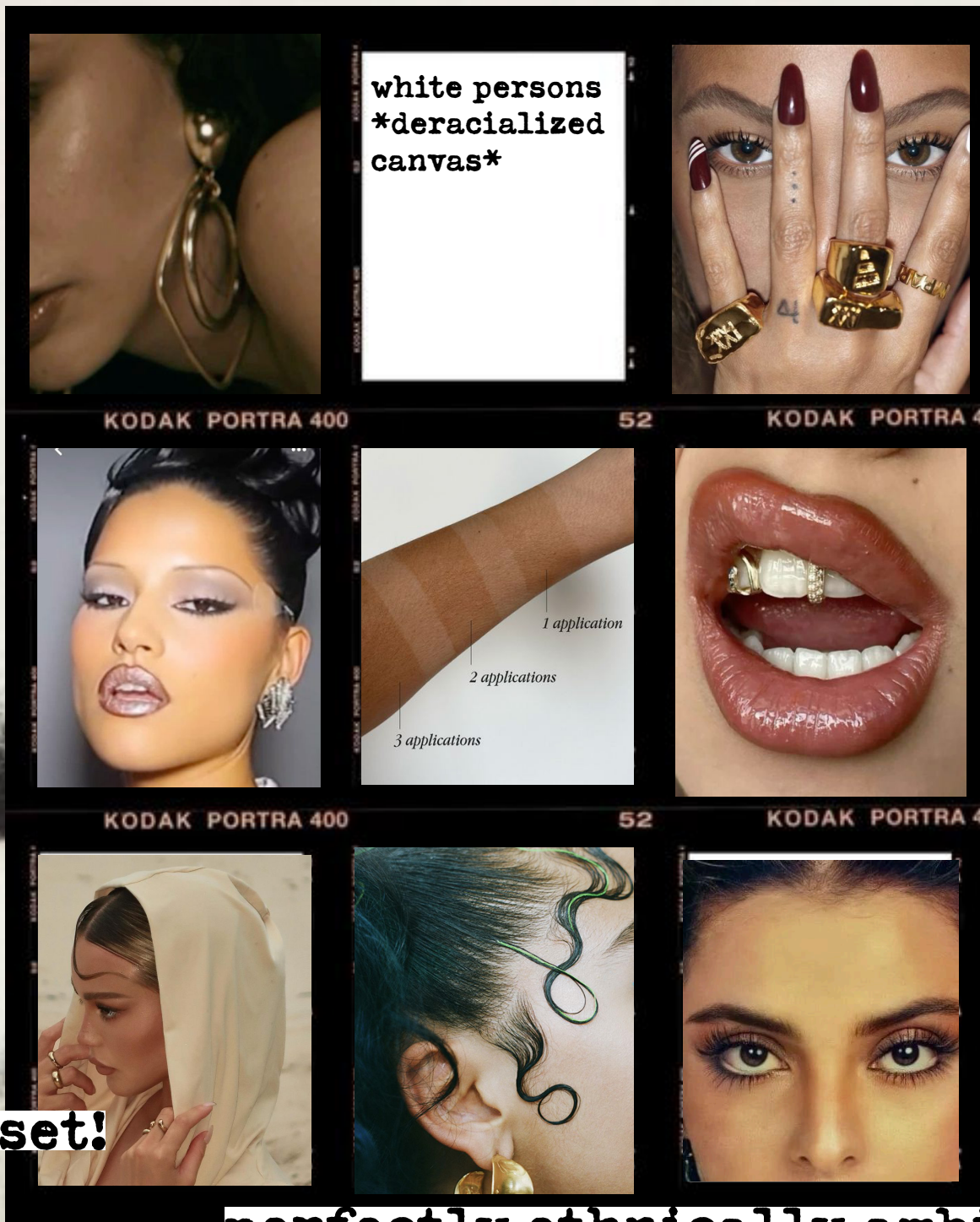
"Mixed-face"

Histories of eugenics, racial purity movements, anti-miscegenation and ethnic cleansing leave no question about white populations historical obsession with racial categorization. However, the obsession has turned to fetish in recent decades. When did achieving a state of ambiguity and suggestion/exaggeration of ethnic claims become such a sexy form of capital?

The amount of white American people attempting to assume ambiguity is realizing a contrived

Mulatto Millennium.

how-to guide for "mixed-face"



disclaimer: I'f you're white and don't like your racialization/treatment after following our guide, don't worry! you can easily remove your "mixed-face"

What role does mixed race exoticism play in trend cycles?

Younger, woke-r generations have found a way to incorporate non-white signifiers into their fashion trends without obviously appropriating one culture to give the appearance of racial ambiguity.

Digital movement of art, circulation of popular culture trends and social media curation has platformed artists/public figures in a hyper-commodified way.

**Get the look. Steal her style! Bohemian-this,
Rasta-chic that. Box braids Kendall Jenner braids.
Talking beads festival season waist jewellery.
Jhumkas Boho. Hair-oiling and plaiting...
"clean girl aesthetic".**

Soul music and Chola beauty subculture and Eastern spirituality and cheap versions of Native traditional dress and South Asian body adornment.

**dear, voyeurs
& vultures,** Our traditions are not your trends.

**READ: Does Multiraciality Lighten?: Me-Too
Ethnicity and the Whiteness Trap**

"The two most striking themes—some would say movements—in recent ethnic studies literature are expressions of multiraciality and studies of Whiteness."

- Paul Spickard, University of California Santa Barbara.



**READ: New Faces, Old Faces: Counting the Multiracial
Population Past and Present**

"Multiracial Americans have often been heralded as 'new people' and in fact have been rediscovered as such more than once in the last century."

- Ann Morning, Princeton University.

excerpt from "The Generational Locus of Multiraciality and Its Implications for Racial Self-Identification"

**"Sustained academic attention to "the
multiracial experience" (Root 1996) emerged in
the 1990s, making it a fairly new (though
vibrant) area of scholarly inquiry. The
availability of large-scale data for such research
has also been rather limited until recently. The
U.S. government formally recommended the
collection of multiple-race responses in the
census in 1997, and thus only two decennial
censuses (2000 and 2010) so far have included
this information." (Morning, Saperstein)**

what is IDENTITY NEGOTIATION?

in a journal by Osei-Kofi, concepts of identity negotiation are resulted by flexing societal definitions of one's racial categorization and an individual's alignment or disagreement with that definition. Multiracial individuals must navigate, assimilate, deviate and reconcile the intersections of their racial belonging and perception.

These examinations of multiraciality do not exist solely within the intimate thoughts and feelings of multiracial individuals, but on a greater scale of academia. The way conventions of multiraciality are studied, learned, and communicated range from casual discourse, broader diversity coursework and specific race/mixed race studies.

If you still think mixed race studies are simple, please read Identity, Fluidity, and Groupism: The Construction of Multiraciality in Education Discourse. Nana, Osei-Kofi.

Imagine a mixed person.

What do they look like? What do you call them? What do you really think??

"broni"

"mulatto"

"mixed"

language

forms personal thought patterns and
constructs cultural systems of
categorization.

continuously harkening back to white
interpretations of POC cultural expressions
interrupts the ability to decenter whiteness in
critical race studies. Shifting focus from solely
dynamics of white + (fill-in-the-blank) helps
decode cultures outside the lens of
colonialism/imperialism as well as legitimize
multiracial identities that do not include white
ness.

In a book about biracial self-determination, author Marion Kilson dissects biracial visibility and how mixed individuals work to secure categories of their own within social-racial hierarchies. (Claiming Place: Biracial Young Adults of the Post-Civil Rights Era). The points of emphasis within Kilson's work align with pillars of critical mixed studies.

"identity formations"

"community"

"intersectionality"

"definitions of race post-colonial,
post-civil-war"

When you think of mixed race experience, do you think of strain, confusion, the pressure to choose?

Do you also think of resilience, community building and storytelling?

All of the above.

common
notation

Sources.

Streeter, Caroline A. "The hazards of visibility: 'bifacial' women, media images, and narratives of identity." *New Faces in a Changing America: Multiracial Identity in the 21st Century*, 2003, pp. 301–322, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452233840.n15>.

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thanks 4 reading

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