Their Eyes Are Watching Us

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THEIR EYES ARE WATCHING US

Simone Cotton

My current series of portraits is created by my desire to see a greater representation of Black women in art. The title, paying homage to Zora Neale Hurston’s novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, alludes to the impact and inspiration that Black women have constructed and society has taken—in politics, social justice, fashion, dance, music, social culture, amongst others. The ideas of Black women can often be overlooked until someone else appropriates those same traits, and what once was viewed as unworthy of attention is now bold, innovative, and contemporary.

In these pieces, each woman is created differently from her sister, showing the diverse beauty found within one group of women. They embrace originality and self-love—through hair, embellishments, and the meanings behind their names. Adorned with gold and halos, I represent Black women as a community that deserves praise, recognition, and respect. Many people, consciously or not, watch them; in return, these self-confident women meet the gaze of the viewer, unbothered.
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