

JIM CROW AND BLACK AMERICANA, HISTORICAL REFERENCE OF THE ART OF CLAUDE DESIR JR

City Lights thanks Claude Desir Jr for sharing his art and his vision. In his art and clothing brand vii, Claude reclaims derogatory Jim Crow imagery, black face and stereotypes. He calls it 'rebranding.' He says, "Some viewers get offended, some really admire it, and others are just on the fence about it. This is what art is about, starting a conversation, bringing different groups and crowds together."

<https://www.citylightsgallery.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Claude-statement-1-21.pdf>



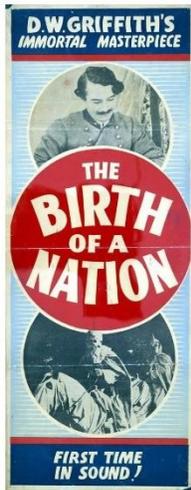
Left art by Claude Desir Jr, Right poster of the Jim Crow minstrel character portrayed by blackface performer Thomas Rice in 1833.

WHO WAS JIM CROW?

A minstrel character named "Jim Crow" was a fictitious persona created and performed by Thomas Rice, a white entertainer in the 1830's

and 40's. Rice popularized black face minstrel shows that portrayed derogatory impersonations of Black people. Performers donned a black face caricature, exaggerating facial features with white lips. This imagery and demeaning stereotypes were used in advertising for everyday products like pancake mix, soap and tobacco. Learn more about Jim Crow, the minstrel character, Black Americana, and Jim Crow policies and practices. Watch this video from the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia from Ferris University.

<https://youtu.be/yf7jAF2Tk40>



The title Jim Crow was then used to refer to policy of segregation and restricting the rights of freed Black slaves after the Civil War, continuing to 1968. This demonstrates how advertising and forms of art and entertainment make an impact on attitudes, thoughts and actions and produce consequences. Looking at this time in history can provide insight and reflection on current events, issues and attitudes.

Read more about Jim Crow Laws.

<https://www.history.com/topics/early-20th-century-us/jim-crow-laws>

BLACK AMERICANA AND AUNT JEMIMA.

The characterization of African Americans was propagandized through advertisements and artifacts, like the Aunt Jemima, Cream of Wheat. Who was the real Aunt Jemima?

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/untold-story-real-aunt-jemima-fight-preserve-legacy/story?id=72293603>