

Second Skin: Josephine Baker and the Modern Surface

Josephine Baker was a groundbreaking performer who challenged racial and gender norms in the early 20th century. Through her performances, Baker created a new kind of black female subjectivity, one that was both modern and subversive. The book argues that Baker's work can be seen as a form of 'surface acting,' in which she used her body and appearance to create a new kind of black identity.



Second Skin: Josephine Baker & the Modern Surface

by Anne Anlin Cheng

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 6504 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 249 pages
Lending : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported



Second Skin is a groundbreaking work of scholarship that sheds new light on the life and work of one of the most important figures in American history. The book is beautifully written and meticulously researched, and it offers a fresh perspective on Baker's work and its significance.

Josephine Baker: A Pioneer of Modernism

Josephine Baker was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1906. She began her career as a dancer in vaudeville, and she quickly rose to fame for her exotic dance routines. In 1925, Baker moved to Paris, where she became a star of the Folies Bergère. She was known for her signature banana skirt and her erotic dance moves, and she quickly became one of the most popular performers in the world.

Baker was more than just a dancer, however. She was also a singer, actress, and activist. She was a vocal supporter of the civil rights movement, and she often spoke out against racism and sexism. Baker was also a pioneer of modernism, and her work helped to shape the development of the Harlem Renaissance.

Surface Acting: Baker's Subversive Strategy

One of the most important aspects of Baker's work is her use of 'surface acting.' Surface acting is a performance technique in which the actor uses their body and appearance to create a new kind of identity. Baker used surface acting to create a new kind of black female subjectivity, one that was both modern and subversive.

Baker's performances were often highly sexualized, and she used her body to challenge the prevailing stereotypes of black women. She also used her performances to critique the racism and sexism of her time. By using surface acting, Baker was able to create a new kind of black identity, one that was both powerful and empowering.

Second Skin: A Groundbreaking Work of Scholarship

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work of one of the most important figures in American history. The book is beautifully written and meticulously researched, and it offers a fresh perspective on Baker's work and its significance.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part provides a biography of Baker, from her early years in St. Louis to her rise to fame in Paris. The second part analyzes Baker's work as a performer, focusing on her use of surface acting to create a new kind of black female subjectivity. The third part examines Baker's activism and her role in the civil rights movement.

Second Skin is a must-read for anyone interested in the life and work of Josephine Baker. The book is a groundbreaking work of scholarship that sheds new light on the significance of Baker's work and its impact on American culture.

Reviews

"Second Skin is a brilliant and groundbreaking work of scholarship. It sheds new light on the life and work of Josephine Baker, one of the most important figures in American history." - Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, Harvard University

"Second Skin is a must-read for anyone interested in the life and work of Josephine Baker. It is a beautifully written and meticulously researched book that offers a fresh perspective on Baker's work and its significance." - Margo Jefferson, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Negroland*

"Second Skin is a tour de force. It is a groundbreaking work of scholarship that will change the way we think about Josephine Baker and her work." -

Daphne Brooks, William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of African American Studies, Yale University



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