Cultural extinction through the lens of Brazilian photographer Thiago Borba

Monday 18 November, 2019

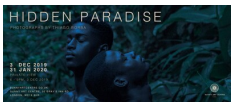
Hidden Paradise | Photographs by Thiago Borba is a new solo photography exhibition opening **at the Sunny Art Centre in London on Dec 3rd 2019** and on view **until Jan 31st 2020**. The internationally acclaimed photographer Thiago Borba will display the work from his *Black is Beautiful* series of photographs, shot in his native country of Brazil. The exhibition wishes to explore the problem of cultural extinction which many minorities worldwide face as a result of assimilating or annihilating policies pushed forward by dominant cultures. Thiago portrays the Afro-descendant population of Brazil, especially in Bahia, creating images that exalt the power of their national heritage by uniting the lush Brazilian landscape and its people.

Thiago Borba is a contemporary photographer born and raised in Salvador, the capital of the state of Bahia, Brazil. The historic, complex culture of Bahia is one interwoven with tensions between a dominant display of white culture and its native black and mixed-race population. Bahia is the state with the highest percentage of black and mixed-race population in Brazil. Yet, white culture dominates the sociocultural context of mainstream media, thus projecting whiteness as the dominant culture while casting the native black and mixed-race identity as a minority group. Although around half of Brazilians identify themselves as black or mixed-race, there is still a sociocultural dominance of the white population that controls the mainstream media and cultural context of Brazil. As the son of a black father with a white mother, the artist is the result of this complex Brazilian racial colourism. He thus began the *Black is Beautiful* series as an investigation of the racial issues in Brazil.

The artist's rich photos highlight the diverse beauty of Afro-Brazilian people and their connection to the beautiful natural landscape of Brazil. It initially focuses on dark-skinned black men and women from Bahia, as Thiago feels that "What is spoken of the magic of Bahia comes originally from the black. This energy they say that Bahia has is black. It's the black person who produces that song. It's the black who has that smile, and that way of talking that captivates you."[1] He says that "The reason why my work focuses on this subject, is to search for a place of origin since my return to Salvador after ten years of absence; it was a way to reconcile with my city and my roots." In his photographs, Borba takes us on a rich aesthetic journey that engages with issues surrounding cultural hegemony and historical injustices, while simultaneously simply displaying the joy and beauty of Bahia, its natural environment, and its people.

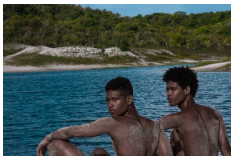
[1] Travae, M., 'The Bahia artist Thiago Borba portrays black beauty and seeks to deconstruct racism in his photographic project "Black is Beautiful"' (16/02/18, Blackwomenofbrazil.co).
https://blackwomenofbrazil.co/the-bahia-artist-thiago-borba-portrays-black-beauty/

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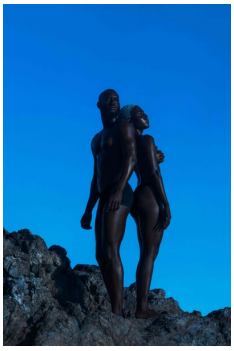












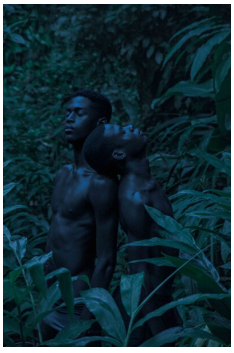


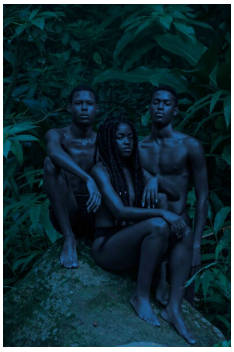












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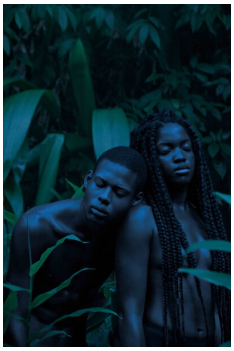
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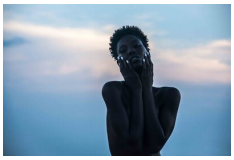
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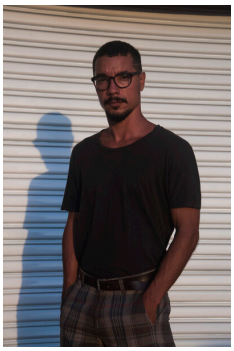
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