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I Am Iman



Synopsis

Iman's emergence in 1975 sparked an upheaval in cultural identity that continues today, and her first book is a gloriously entertaining hybrid essay on the cultural-cum-political power of good looks. A quarter century of the most famous photographs by Helmut Newton, Steven Meisel, Herb Ritts, Peter Lindbergh, Bruce Weber, Scavullo, David Bailey, Nick Knight, and many others are contextualized by well-known essayists, a chorus of celebrity contributions, and Iman's own take on her much-mythologized career. The book's outrageous pop design--by graphic designers Barnbrook Studios--makes it plain that this is not just one woman's success story. *I Am Iman* captures the funny, infuriating, and often absurd validation of black and ethnic looks in a beauty industry where billions of dollars--and the self-image of women everywhere--are on the line. Peeks behind the curtain and scintillating interviews are courtesy of feminist critic bell hooks, Interview editor Ingrid Sischy, model and manager Bethann Hardison, and such celebrities as Cindy Crawford, Yves St. Laurent, Naomi Campbell, Bruce Weber, Tyra Banks, and many more. With graphic design featuring gatefolds, diecuts, and other interactive elements, as well as specially commissioned, never-before-seen images by Annie Leibowitz, Ellen Von Unwerth, Sante D'Orazio, and Michel Comte, this book is an assemblage worthy of any fashionista's dream.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I Am Iman is a wonderful book. That it is wonderful to look at won't come as a surprise to anyone. What is a surprise, visually, though, are many of the photographs, all chosen by Iman: of course there are plenty of traditional beauty and fashion images testifying to Iman's career as a singular

catwalk and photographic model. (These images make up a fascinating archive for anyone interested in photography, fashion, social history, studio 54, sex, gender, high fashion and race). Much more remarkable, however, are the riskier choices of images. This is not a book which wastes any time at the altar of traditional beauty. Iman shows herself every which way: nude, pregnant, dressed up, and naked, fleshy and lovely. The book is worth getting for the iconic photograph by Annie Leibovitz of two generations of black models all sitting together. But do not miss the amazing collaboration between Sandra Bernhard and Iman: this shows Iman as a performer unconstrained by vanity (although, it turns out that she looks great dressed up like a drag queen), and it is this Iman - unabashed, unashamed and upfront that is presented again and again throughout this book, both in its images and in its writing. Yes, the essays by David Bowie, Ingrid Sischey and Bell Hooks are great, but the riveting writing comes from Iman herself. She is an honest and unpretentious writer and she certainly has a lot to say and many stories to tell. She does not put a gloss on any thing that she encountered or did over her remarkable career, and though the book is not a tell all (thank god), Iman is not shy about sharing regrets, mistakes and ambivalent feelings. This is not a series of puff pieces about a celebrity. Far from it!

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