

Remarks on *Miscegenated Family Album*

by ARATI RAO. 1994

Excerpts from a talk for "Diaspora and Hybridism: Paradigms for a Global 21st Century," a faculty symposium on issues emerging from a viewing of *Miscegenated Family Album* in *Body As Measure* at the Davis Museum, Wellesley, MA, Oct 1994.

. . . . The conceptual action of *Miscegenated Family Album* takes place interstitially, in the spaces between, presenting a challenge to viewers to become intimately involved in reading Nefertiti anew through Devonia, and vice versa.

The visually persuasive juxtapositioning is replete with politically destabilizing relationships. Although the piece draws upon valuable objects of the past, it does not objectify the past, does not treat the past as a single, monolithic object. At the same time, there is a valuing of the very past it is her clear intention to muddy. The piece makes a strong argument for instability, for fluidity; it does not want closure. . . .

While the authorial presence is highly political, it is also ironic and powerfully seductive. *Miscegenated Family Album* commands us to think relationally, but its "commando" mood is counteracted by its playfulness; the white spaces are a zone of vulnerability where differences, potent even today, are captured and remain. . . .

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