



Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas

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The Black Panther Party for Self Defense, formed in the aftermath of the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965, remains one of the most controversial movements of the 20th-century. Founded by the charismatic Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, the party sounded a defiant cry for an end to the institutionalized subjugation of African Americans. The Black Panther newspaper was founded to articulate the party's message and artist Emory Douglas became the paper's art director and later the party's Minister of Culture. Douglas's artistic talents and experience proved a powerful combination: his striking collages of photographs and his own drawings combined to create some of the era's most iconic images, like that of Newton with his signature beret and large gun set against a background of a blood-red star, which could be found blanketing neighborhoods during the 12 years the paper existed. This landmark book brings together a remarkable lineup of party insiders who detail the crafting of the party's visual identity.

Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas Details

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Martha says

"For every pig, a frying pan!"

Sasha says

It's just so GOOD and so inspiring when powerful messages find themselves so perfectly reflected in visual art.

Uriah says

The true purpose of an artist is portrayed in this inspiring volume. Where are the Emory Douglas' of today?

Mike says

A good art book filled with Emory Douglas's work. His friends and peers join him to help explain the situation that evoked the harsh critical pieces. There were several personal notes that helped enlighten some things for me. One memorable one is when Amiri Baraka mentioned that Federico Garcia Lorca had a theater group called Baraka. This has little to do with the BPP except for to remind me that it is all intertwined. Artists and art through out times of injustice react to each other. Art is inspiration. And Emory Douglas's art is trying to make people aware in order to act.

Wendy says

this is such a great book. first off, the images of douglas' work are massive, powerful and loaded with impact. the majority are collected from the black panther newspaper. plus there are roughly 5 articles about him, his art, and its/his relevance in the community (some of the info overlaps as the articles exist individually). absolutely necessary.

Aisha says

If you're in Cali, check out his work through a collaboration with Douglas and Keba Konte at Guerilla Cafe in Berkeley.

Simon says

This is a short but beautifully illustrated retrospective of the work of Emory Douglas - the Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party and a powerful graphic artist who was responsible for creating a strong and distinctive visual identity for the BPP, largely through his work for 'The Black Panther' newspaper. The book contains nine short essays covering Douglas's work and the history of the BPP, including contributions from central BPP figures Bobby Seale and Kathleen Cleaver, with the standout piece, for me, being Colette Gaiter's essay tracing the influences on, and resulting from, Douglas's art.

The BPP was a revolutionary, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist organisation fighting for black liberation in socially-disadvantaged communities, representing an audience who largely - in the words of a couple of contributors to this volume - 'weren't readers'. Douglas's art was influenced by the nascent Black Arts Movement, by traditional African art, by political art emerging from other revolutionary movements in Cuba, Vietnam, Africa and the Middle East, and by direct feedback from the community in which Douglas lived, and his innovative techniques incorporating cartoons and photo montage drew deeply on the visual history of America's own racial struggles, from images referencing slavery through to contemporary visual reportage of lynchings. It therefore represented both a two-way ideological feed, into and out from the BPP, and an important political mechanism. Contributor Amiri Bokara describes Douglas's art as 'a combination of expressionist agit prop and homeboy familiarity', while Gaiter celebrates his achievement in constructing 'a visual mythology of power for people who felt powerless'.

If I'm being honest, I'm more impressed by Douglas's simple and sublime illustrations depicting people in the community, often women, in combat poses, or struggling with daily hardship, than his raw early cartoons of policemen as pigs, which seem to my ignorant eye to be both artistically and politically less mature, but I can understand the personal and social impulses that fed the full spectrum of his art.

If you're interested in this kind of thing, I'd strongly recommend the V&A's touring exhibition, 'A World to Win: Posters of Protest and Revolution', which I caught in Nottingham but which is currently at Wolverhampton Art Gallery. And it's always pleasing to spot a Routledge book in the references ('Liberation, Imagination and the Black Panther Party', edited by Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas, 2001).

zingha. says

When freedom propaganda and art meet!!! What a body of work!!! What I aspire for in my own work!!!

Soopaseb says

Awesome !

Without the Black Panther Party does Obama could have been elected ? A fantastic journey through the Panthers' history, beginning with the right of armed self-defense to emphasizing the social programs they

installed in the neighborhoods. Powerful images provoking a radical shift in the minds of readers.

Eric says

As much a civil rights history as a design one, this book on the former Minister of Culture for the Black Panther party is required reading for anyone who believes visual culture can be a force for social good. But one is also struck by the originality of Douglas's work. He created an completely new aesthetic appropriate to its incendiary content and the audience he was trying to reach.

Andrew Novak says

Six Stars

Uh, HOLYFUCKINGSHIT—THISMIGHTBETHEGREATESTTHINGEVER.

??? says

Absolutely beautiful! Gives detailed descriptions and info on ED's work. What his work has done for the BPP and is still doing today. Also, highlights how important art truly is.

Jessica says

It was a good survey of how media can push ideas. The graphic design was just as important to the cause the speeches and protests. The book included the illustrator's thoughts and opinions on his work as well as what was happening during the time the piece was produced so you get a better understanding of why certain stylistic choices were made.

Sheehan says

Great assortment of Douglas' work with the Black Panther paper; the associated articles by Sonia Sanchez, Kathleen Cleaver, Amiri Baraka, etc. were great era-specific contemporary accounts of Douglas's works.

Winter Sophia Rose says

A Great Revolutionary Artist!

