

A general chronological approach outlining the major achievements of the African institutions, their style of governance, and their contributions to science and education compared to the contemporary styles of the West and of contemporary Africa may have elevated the book to major proportions. As it stands, it is a very good work and clearly identifies the points which have skewed the verdict on African people and African civilizations.

Freddie G. Young
Pine Villa Montessori Elementary School

Vicki Kopf & Dennis Szacks, eds. *Next Generation: Southern Black Aesthetic*. (Winston-Salem: Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, 1990) 163 pp., \$29.95 paper.

This catalogue, named for the 1990 Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SCCA) exhibition in Winston-Salem, features not only many reproductions from the exhibition but also essays by artist/philosopher Adrian Piper and curator Lowery S. Sims, a panel featuring Richard Powell and Judith Wilson, and two group artist interviews. Also excerpted is a brief segment from a 1990 panel at SCCA which features Piper, Kinshasha Conwill, Coco Fusco, and Leslie King-Hammond. Both panel segments are of value, especially as they broadly contextualize the eighty-one pages of reproductions. Unfortunately, each of the written segments is quite brief, with Powell and Wilson's discussion ending far too abruptly.

Offering trenchant commentary on African American life in the South (and in the United States as a whole), these works are visually stunning, from the "found object" sculpture of Lonnie Holley, Gregory Henry, and Jesse Lott to the multimedia photo-pieces and installations of Pat Ward-Williams. The Dallas Museum of Art's larger 1989 exhibit and book, *Black Art: Ancestral Legacy*, focused less on contemporary artists like these twenty, instead addressing ancestry and diasporic history. While these topics are present in the essays/discussions in *Next Generation*, they are so in a less vivid and circumspect manner. Of course this is a smaller catalogue from a smaller publisher.

Addressing the differences between the art at the SCCA's exhibit and that of the Euroethnic "postmodern," Adrian Piper argues in her essay that "the ideology of postmodernism functions to repress and exclude colored women artists from the art-historical canon of the Euroethnic mainstream" with an "attitude of mourning for the past glories and achievements of all previous stages of Euroethnic art history...memorialized and given iconic status through

Explorations in Sights and Sounds

appropriation into contemporary art world artifacts." Of course the exhibit did not focus exclusively on women but on the aesthetics of perhaps the newest in the long historical chain of "New Souths." The art texts, including sculpture, painting, installations, etc., are rich with what Piper calls "an alternative art-historical progression that narrates a history of prejudice, repression, and exclusion, and looks, not backward, but forward to a more optimistic future." The range of what Richard Powell calls "found objects" and stereotypical pop culture images interwoven into complex aesthetic works indicate what he refers to as a "cultural recollection of assemblage" that urges artistry in "a very specific African American way." Cultural critics like Piper are acutely important to a project like this to defray the customary detachment from the aesthetic experience that we (as Piper might recognize) have come to expect.

A recent *60 Minutes* segment covered the troubles of African American artists in the South who have lately experienced great interest from the art world without receiving concomitant financial remuneration. In short, they are being "ripped off." It is thus vital that such a document as *Next Generation* exists with accompanying essays to elaborate the historicity of the items displayed in the exhibit. Filling a void in contemporary African American art scholarship and representation—and one of only a handful of extant overviews of African American art—*Next Generation* is significant.

Andy Bartlett
University of Washington

David Levering Lewis. *W.E.B. DuBois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993).

In a stunning exhibition of biographical craftsmanship, David Levering Lewis narrates, for the years between 1868 and 1919, both the spectacular achievements—and their import for intellectual life in our own times—and the equally significant failings of one of the most important American intellectuals of the twentieth century. Lewis's erudite tome supercedes all of the previous biographical treatments of DuBois and will doubtlessly require an equally Herculean effort to match this phenomenal work. Indeed, the awesome task of concluding the latter part of DuBois's long, controversial, and complex life will be exhaustively challenging. Since any exhaustive review of Lewis's work would require much greater space, I will confine my comments to an adumbration of the import of DuBois's