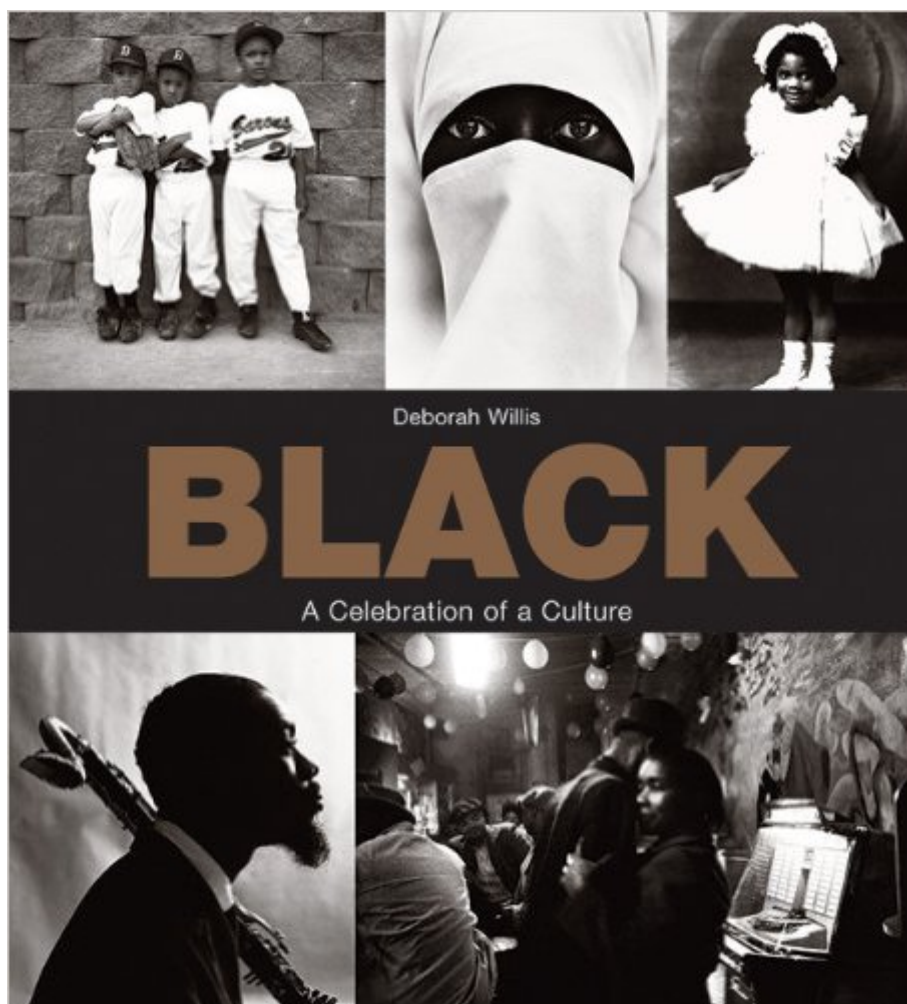


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# Black: A Celebration Of A Culture



## Synopsis

Tucked away in the dusty halls of the Smithsonian archives and nearly forgotten by most historians, black culture is a vast, complex, interconnected web of different people, trends, and lifestyles. Deborah Willis has dug through the archives and hunted down the remnants that tell the wonderful and tragic history of a people. Tackling all subjects with bravery and frankness, Deborah Willis's work is a true treasure to behold. *Black: A Celebration of a Culture* presents a vibrant panorama of twentieth-century black culture in America and around the world. Broken up into segments that examine in detail such subjects as children, work, art, beauty, Saturday night, and Sunday morning, the photos detail the history and the evolution of a culture. Each photograph, handpicked by Deborah Willis, America's leading historian of African American photography, celebrates the world of music, art, fashion, sports, family, worship, or play. With five hundred photographs from every time period from the birth of photography to the birth of hip-hop, this book is a truly joyous exhibition of black culture. From Jessie Owens to Barry Bonds, Ella Fitzgerald to Halle Berry, *Black: A Celebration of a Culture* is joyous and inspiring.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Deborah Willis is a leading historian of African-American photography and is the Professor of Photography & Imaging at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. In *BLACK: A CELEBRATION OF A CULTURE*, she has compiled over 500 photographs vividly displaying African-Americans in all areas of life to include: fashion, sports, worship, with family, and

more. It is a wonderful collection that showcases the beauty, success, and the societal place African-Americans have carved for themselves in a country in which we weren't really invited. Not only does it show the images that we're familiar with in the history of our race, but it also shows those common moments of everyday things validating the famous saying, "pictures are worth a thousand words." It is a reflection of our lives and one of the most rewarding ways of recording one's memories. There's something to represent everyone and everything of our past and present: from little boys playing sports, to little girls in Sunday dresses and jumping rope and further back in times of civil rights demonstrations, in the cotton fields, and back to the present spotlighting weekends hanging out with the family. There's nothing missing in this brilliant and beautiful collector's item. The rich culture displayed in this book is one that should be shared by everyone and one that each of us should mimic in our own families, through our photo albums, scrapbooks, or other honorary spots we've made for archiving our bloodline. It is "one story--our story--told through photographic imagery." Reviewed by Tee C. Royal of The RAWSISTAZ Reviewers

Deborah Willis compiles a book of photographs dating back a hundred years, depicting African American history through ordinary lives. The photos include musicians and painters, poets and scholars, and plain ordinary working wage-earners. All the photos in the book are positive, no shirtless tattooed gold-draped thugs or hopeless images. We see parents with their kids, Elks Club gatherings, religion, farming, and learning. One of the displays I found most unusual was the one of Black College sports teams. There was a 1940 photo of the Howard University women's rifle team, which shocked me, because shooting sports are not a stereotypically African American pastime. As for the era, I thought it even more unusual to see a shooting team composed of women at the time. Then again, WWII was approaching, so maybe this had to do with national defense? The Howard University boxing team also has a photo here. No tattoos or funny piercings. Altogether, I saw it's good to see something positive here. One of the photos was of a woman in New Jersey who had a backyard farm on her property for decades, growing her own food and selling it in nearby Philadelphia to make some extra money. The subject of African American farmers has been lost on the media, usually ignored in favor of hip-hop and Hollywood. But it's good to see images of people prospering in their own way and enjoying the proceeds.

Pictorial just arrived in the mail today and I can't put it down. Book is divided into sections ranging from The Arts, Sports, and Sunday Mornings (to name a few). The photographs vary in location and in era. Some of the people are easily recognizable historical figures and celebrities, while some look

as though they could be friends or family. I showed the collection to my grandmother and she fell in love instantly, she said it reminded her of a family photo album. I may have to order her a copy.

It's a beautiful book. Everyone one pick it up from my coffee table, are in awe of the beautiful photographs.

I really enjoyed looking at this book, it reminded me of things when I was growing up. Would recommend this to anyone that likes to look at good pictures.

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