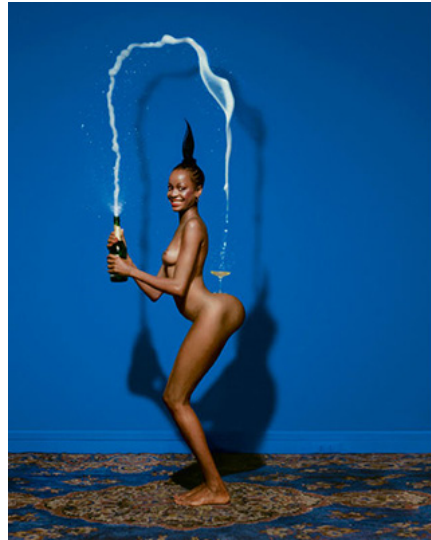


NEW YORK



Carolina Beaumont, New York, 1976



Paper Magazine Cover, November 2014

So, Was That Kim Kardashian Cover Photoshopped?

By Erica Schwiegershausen, November 13, 2014

Photographs of Kim Kardashian's butt have long been fodder for Photoshop debates. Yet none have required such suspension of disbelief as the image of her well-oiled bum that graces Paper's winter 2014 cover (not to mention the subsequently released full-frontal). So, was it Photoshopped? Probably not — at least in the sense of being digitally altered. But it was almost certainly changed in radical ways. Jean-Paul Goude, the French photographer who shot the spread, has a long history of manipulating images using props and analog techniques throughout his career. "I don't want to sound immodest, but I was Photoshopping images long before digital cameras and computers had even been invented," Goude, who is not currently commenting, told the Herald in 2010. Case in point: his iconic arabesque image of Grace Jones, which was first published in New York Magazine in 1977 and served as the cover art for Jones's 1985 album, *Island Life*.

"If you really study it, the pose is anatomically impossible," Goude writes of the picture in his 1982 book, *Jungle Fever*. "First, I photographed her in different positions — to get all my references, which I combined," he explains. "I cut her legs apart, lengthened them, and turned her body completely to face the audience ... then I started painting, joining up all those pieces to give the illusion that Grace Jones actually posed for the photograph and that only she was capable of assuming such a position." Goude, who dated Jones from 1977 to 1984, is credited with launching her career: In addition to designing album covers, he also directed her music videos, choreographed live performances, and helped develop her image. She also features prominently in his work from that period, which, over the course of the '80s, became increasingly synonymous with willful distortion — "credible illusion," which is how he describes the technique he refers to as "French Correction."

"The editors at Esquire came up with the pun," he explained to Vice in 2012. "The aim of French Correction was to play with changing the proportions of people's bodies, pre-Photoshop. Chopping up photos and rearranging them in a montage to elongate limbs or exaggerate the size of someone's head or some other aspect appealed to me on a lot of levels — I'm always searching for equilibrium, symmetry, and rhythm in an image."

It's hard not to notice that Goude's image distortions have often been used in service of the objectification and eroticization of black women. "Blacks are the premise of my work ... I have jungle fever," he told *People* in 1979. The image that appears on the cover of Goude's book with that title depicts Jones naked, in a cage, surrounded by raw meat (cropped out of the cover photograph, though visible in other versions, is a sign that reads "DO NOT FEED THE ANIMAL.") In the same book, he captions the above image of Jones "N***** Arabesque." His primitive imagery hasn't evolved much over the past three decades: In 2009, he shot "Wild Things," a safari-themed editorial for Harper's Bazaar featuring Naomi Campbell racing a cheetah and playing jump rope with baboons.

The newsstand-friendly version of Goude's Kardashian cover features a recreation of his 1976 portrait Carolina Beaumont — in which a nude, smiling black woman performs the above-mentioned physically dubious Champagne trick. "The subject wears an 'exotic' hairstyle and 'smiles' for the camera in the pose of a 'happy savage pleased to serve,'" Janell Hobson writes in *Venus in the Dark* (via Styleite). "A 'primitive' vision to provide pornographic pleasure and intoxication presumably for a white male spectator."

It's also worth noting that Goude has a history of "improving," as he calls it, black women's butts. Writing about a miniature sculpture he made of the model Toukie Smith in the mid-'70s, he expounds: "I had always admired black women's backsides, the ones who look like racehorses. Toukie's backside was voluptuous enough, but nowhere near a racehorse's ass, so I gave her one. There she was, my dream come true, in living color."

When asked about the choice to use Goude, Paper editorial director Mickey Boardman expressed nothing but enthusiasm. "We're old friends of Jean-Paul and are always looking for an excuse to run something," he told the Cut. Pressed for details about the logistics of the Champagne shoot, he would only say, "That's the magic of Jean-Paul Goude!"