



Fig 1: Western Fantasy & Eastern Realism

This piece explores North African tribal iconography as depicted in Western media, as well as the consumerism within, and commodification of American street style. What links these two themes is the unseen illustrator. Through my research of the Tuareg tribe of North Africa, I seldom found self-authored photographs or documentaries. Each piece of media was photographed or written by a white anthropologist. Street style, which originated within the Black American community is a cornerstone of American fashion. Additionally, African Americans make up 22% of luxury fashion consumers, however, less than 1% of fashion CEOs are Black (mediaculture). In Western media, images I have received of North African tribes, and American streetwear depict racialized people, yet those depicted are rarely the author or benefactor of their image.

Inspired by the presence of an unseen illustrator, Fig 1. explores the mystification of the East from the Western observer. For this illustration, I drew the Eastern women from memory and a mental archive of comic imagery and paintings I've collected over the years. I ended up with two exotic women dressed in billowing fabric, beading, and metalwork. The drawing process didn't require a lot of thinking. I'm curious about why these drawings felt natural, and what it means to subconsciously buy into myths as an image maker.

Idealized features and fashion proportions, 10 + heads tall.

Necklace inspired by Tuareg iconography, abstracted metal work, commonly made of silver and glass beads.

This figure depicts a Black kid wearing AF 1s, headphones, a Nike Tech, and throwing a gang sign. I drew obvious signifiers of streetwear and culture, the Nike Tech being such a popular article of clothing it's often mocked for unoriginality, and AF 1's being one of the most basic sneakers. These clothes are present in mainstream urban culture and fashion, but they are also seen in images depicting or alluding to violence, and lower socioeconomic status. These signifiers are often upheld as gritty and real within arts, but dangerous or unprofessional within politics and the workforce. Although this genre of fashion originated within the Black community, as seen in the fashion CEO-to-consumer discrepancy, there are massive discrepancies within the journalism industry, and politics alike.

In drawing this figure, wondered how a self-authored image could be weaponized, or exploited.

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