

Abstract

This thesis presents research concerning shifting aesthetic sensibilities and meaning among young White women in Johannesburg South Africa. It examines the ways in which the post-apartheid erosion of racially segregated spaces within the city (and within the larger national and international media that influences the culture of the city) are impacting and altering notions of desirable and acceptable “White” beauty and fashion. In opposition to the notion that Black South African culture is becoming increasingly White-identified, and to the conflation of middle class culture with Whiteness, this research found that female beauty and fashion in Johannesburg are becoming increasingly oriented towards a Black-identified aesthetic.