

Self Portrait Series

"Minnette Vari, another South African artist, also bombarded the art world with her provocative installations, videos, and conceptual pieces that frequently probed a traumatized and marginalized psyche. Her controversial *Self Portrait 2* (1995), a digitally-altered and conscious affectation of the artist as a primordial black woman, almost immediately fueled the indignation of even the most cosmopolitan and indulgent critics of contemporary African art. "Here we may not find hate necessarily" wrote the Nigerian artist/art historian/critic Olu Oguibe "but we do find racial disregard and license alright". Apart from the anticipated knee-jerk charges of objectification and cannibalism, Vari's *Self Portrait 2* intentionally elicited a perhaps more intriguing but less analyzed critique of the very real limitations of a postmodern and post-apartheid "self portrait" in South Africa: a place weighted down with racial and political baggage too ponderous and pervasive to ignore."

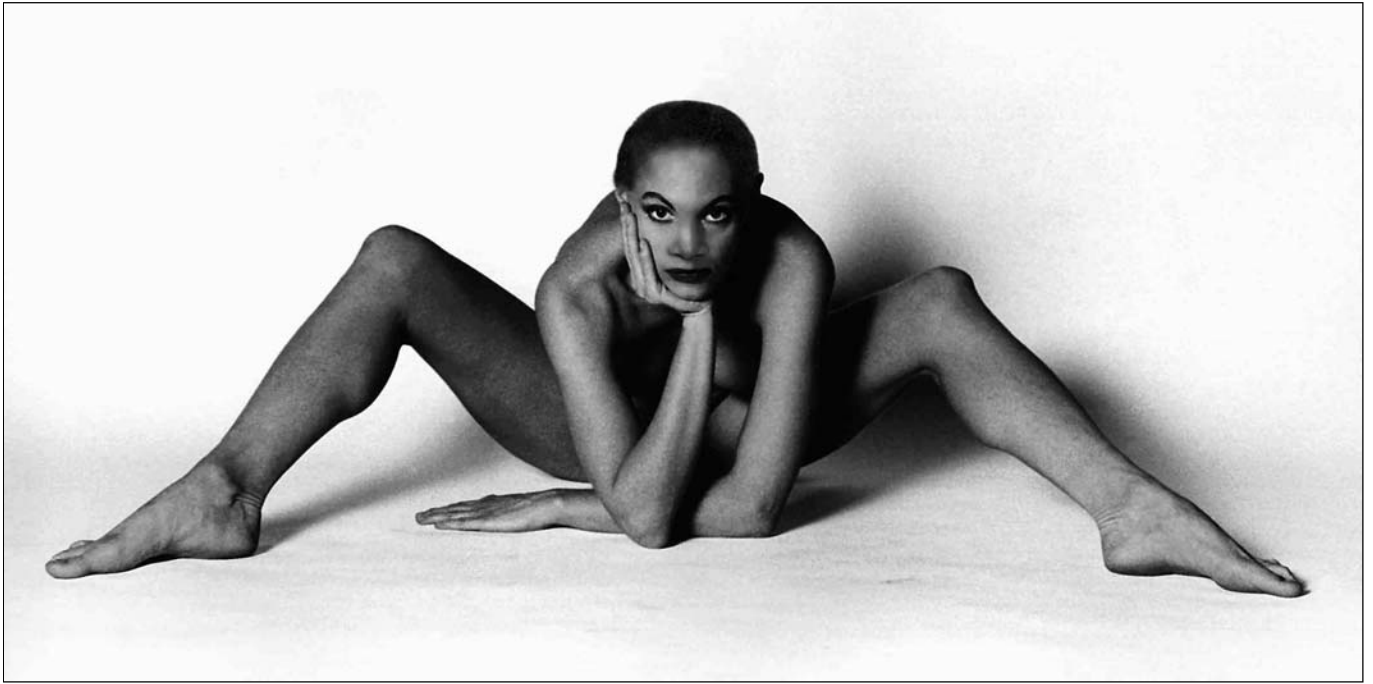
from *BLACK ART: A Cultural History* by Richard J. Powell. 2002, Thames&Hudson, London.



SELF PORTRAIT I

Installation view outside Pretoria Art Museum, 1995 - 1997

digital print on vinyl · dimensions: large-scale public billboard, image 3m x 6m



SELF PORTRAIT SERIES

1995-96

top: Self Portrait I; bottom: Self Portrait II

photographic prints · dimensions: large-scale public billboards and an edition of smaller prints, up to 2.4m wide