

Cultural Studies • Caribbean Studies

“Gladys M. Francis’s *Odious Caribbean Women and the Palpable Aesthetics of Transgression* is a fascinating, pioneering study. Applying her theory of ‘corpomemorial tracing,’ she analyzes texts by literary, visual, and performance artists—novelists, playwrights, poets, filmmakers, painters, and dancers—demonstrating her expertise and contributing new insight into several disciplines. This excellent interdisciplinary work is essential reading for scholars of the French Caribbean; women’s, gender, and sexuality studies; and body studies.”  
—RENÉE LARRIER, Rutgers University

*Odious Caribbean Women and the Palpable Aesthetics of Transgression* examines the methods through which the works of French Caribbean women resist hedonistic conceptions of pleasure, “art for art’s sake” aestheticism, commodification through representations of “uglified” spaces, transgressive “deglamorified” women’s bodies in pain, and explicit corporeal and sexual behaviors. Gladys M. Francis offers an original approach through her reading of the literary, visual, and performing arts (as well as traditional Caribbean dance, music, and oral practices) to arrive at a transregional (trans-Caribbean and transatlantic), transgenre (with regard to forms of text), and transdisciplinary conversation in Francophone, postcolonial, and cultural studies. This interweaving is illustrated through the artistic engagements of artists such as Ina Césaire, Maryse Condé, Sylvaine Dampierre, Fabienne Kanor, Lénablou, Béatrice Mélina, Gisèle Pineau, Simone Schwarz-Bart, and Miriam Warner-Vieyra.

This book presents novel tools to understand how these women artists mark and reinstate embodied trauma, survival, and resistance into history. It posits that cultural performances can disrupt a culture-as-text ethnocentrism because these works provide the means to expose the tangible aesthetics through which the body becomes an archive that bears the psychological, physical, and structural suffering. This book also demonstrates the ways the corporeal realm offered by these transgressive works (through explicit female perspectives on sex, love, and gender) challenges our moral sensibilities, works to sabotage the voyeuristic gaze, and stimulates a new methodology for reading the woman’s body. It focuses on the complex layers of identity formation and bodily representations with respect to issues of sex, consumerism, commodification, violence, gender and women studies, and ethics and moral issues.

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ODIOUS CARIBBEAN WOMEN AND THE PALPABLE AESTHETICS OF TRANSGRESSION



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GLADYS M. FRANCIS