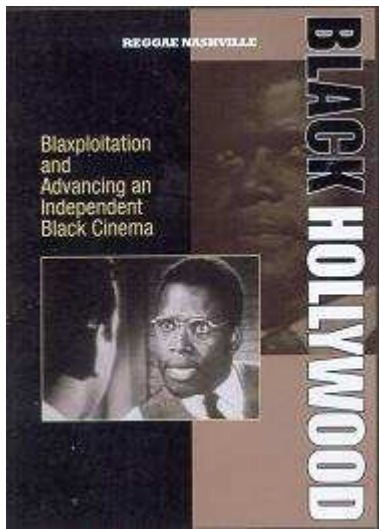


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Tuesday, June 2, 2009

[Black Hollywood: Blaxploitation and Advancing an Independent Black Cinema](#)



These days, African-Americans are very visible in the movies and television, and their presence is strongly noted. However, it was not always so. It has taken a long battle for black artists to reach their current status in the entertainment industry. The very informative “Black Hollywood” splendidly and passionately documents part of this struggle.


Shot in 1984, the documentary features prominent African-American actors, producers and the like, who share strong opinions about the Hollywood Black experience. It powerfully opens with black executive Oscar Williams indicating that one white executive told him: “The reason that the black filmmakers are having so much trouble is because we whites have to protect our jobs, families, etc. Look at what you did for baseball, basketball, boxing...” Williams concludes that “Hollywood is holding to an established order, so that nobody can get in and get a piece of that money.”

In addition to Williams, other interviewees include, for example, Diahnne Abbott, Jim Brown, Rosalind Cash, Paul Mooney, Alfre Woodward, and Vonetta McGee. The careers of some early African-American actors, such as Dorothy Dandridge and Sidney Poitier are also examined. Of particular historical significance is the interview of Lorenzo Tucker (1907-1986) – the so-called Black Valentino --, a stage and screen actor who did films in the twenties and thirties with Oscar Micheaux, becoming a “romantic lead in early black cinema.” In addition, there are also interviews with Joel Fluellen and

Vincenet Tubbs, who speak about the Hollywood of the fifties and sixties. I am sure that this archival of early Black Hollywood material will be new to many, as it was for me.

Directed by Howard Johnson, "Black Hollywood" not only captures the period in which it was filmed, as well as the relevant players at the time, but also goes deep into the past and gives us some great historical information. This is cinema's history at its best. (USA, 1984, color and B&W, 75 min) Reviewed June 2, 2009. **MVD Visual**

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Reactions: