



[http://abiolaabrams.com/afrodite\\_superstar\\_black\\_erotica.html](http://abiolaabrams.com/afrodite_superstar_black_erotica.html)

What people are saying about  
**AFRODITE SUPERSTAR**  
directed by Abiola Abrams  
produced by Candida Royale

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## About the Film:

*AfroDite Superstar* premiered with a university discussion at the New School for Social Research about race, gender, sexuality and healthy portrayals of African American beauty. The experimental comedy featurette (2007) is a feminist empowerment film that Abiola Abrams directed under the name "Venus Hottentot" to reclaim the sexual voice of the South African woman who was kidnapped, exploited, tortured and forced to be a side show freak.

The narrative film also contains erotica (soft) sexual scenes which were co-directed by Candida Royale, the executive producer of the film. The film has been endorsed by *Essence Magazine*, *The Village Voice*, *Spread Magazine*, the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists, and the Feminists for Free Expression.

The *AfroDite Superstar* film was also featured in the art exhibit Hos, Putas and Dragon Ladies: Our Sexuality Remixed at the Chashama Gallery in NYC. To date, several different PhD students are including this film in their studies. The film was also recently featured in 2 academic journals for being ground-breaking as the story shines a light on the negative modern representations of African American beauty, sexuality and empowerment. Babeland interview with Abiola below.

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## Reviews:

"There's erotica to suit almost every taste including the cerebral, like AfroDite Superstar."

- *Essence Magazine*

"Tasteful and femme-friendly, Royalle's best-seller follows self-proclaimed "BAP" (black American princess) turned street-talkin', Lil' Kim-stunt-pulling superstar AfroDite (Simone Valentino) on her quest to self-discovery—and carnal conquest. Set in Harlem, *AfroDite's* features women who quote Gloria Steinem and refuse to have their "power" diminished by dudes. There's more story line than smut, but with a steamy masturbation scene and both sapphic and hetero lovin', *AfroDite Superstar* is feminist porn for dummies, in the best sense."

- *Time Out New York*

"Great Job! There is a lot of sensuality with foreplay, touching and romance that women look for.... Simone Valentino (*AfroDite*) is a breathe of fresh air... Mr. Marcus's style of making love to Simone is how all women would love to be treated....this is one title that stands alone. I highly recommend *Afrodite Superstar*."

- *Ravyn, Dvdtalk.com*

"*AfroDite Superstar* is a female directed movie, and you can tell.... This movie is without a doubt one of my favorite adult full-length features I have ever seen, and trust me, I've seen a lot. The director, *Venus Hottentot*, is a woman on a wonderful mission; she wants to portray real women of all types, colors, sexualities, you name it, in a film in which they can have fun, get off, and be real. In my opinion, she succeeds with this movie. Excellent film, a must see for everyone!"

- *HotMoviesforHer.com*

"Full of profound insights, fantastic original hip-hop songs and hilarious video vixen spoofs, this film puts the typical lily-white offerings of the mainstream porn industry to shame. Beautifully shot with all of the high production values, focus on fabulous female pleasure and general hotness that Candida fans have come to expect. Stunning newcomer Simone Valentino sizzles in every scene and her final showdown with Mr.

Marcus will definitely wear your rewind button out!  
You'll want to watch the whole thing, guaranteed."

- *GoodForHer.com*

"Great chemistry, a diverse cast, and steamy sex scenes make this first feature from the *Femme Chocolat* line a real stand out."

- *Goodvibes.com*

"Besides all the hotness and chemistry between performers, the plot is really engaging...and the sizzling coupling between Simone Valentino and Mr. Marcus actually made us utter the word "Sweet!" out loud in a quiet movie theater... It's not often you see two performers laughing and enjoying themselves during a sex scene instead of making faces like they're slaughtering a suckling pig."

- *Audacia Ray*  
*Fleshbot.com*

"*Afrodite Superstar* introduces a new funky, natural, eclectic, and feminine flavor to plotted features...It's the kind of feature that has a plot line that actually makes sense, and it's totally engaging as well. It's a legitimate movie with erotic themes... The women portrayed in this movie are naturally beautiful. Instead of being made up like fakey fake girls, they are just fabulous by nature. Divine goddesses they are... Overall, *Afrodite Superstar* seems like a very promising flavor for the new brand."

- *SexHerald.com*

"*AfroDite* is played very well by gorgeous Simone Valentino. She brings a pure professionalism to the acting and sex scenes...The film is layered with seduction, passion and hip comedy in a well-written story. The production is top rate with skillful sets, solid camera work and all around impressive production. *AfroDite Superstar* is a breath of fresh air with its sex-positive delivery. This is a film which can be enjoyed by many including couples, people into women of color or just plain regular fans of *Candida Royale's Femme Productions*."

- *IWAAdult.com*

"Constantly entertaining and often arousing, thanks to the cast's exuberant performances."

- Jared Rutter  
AVN SPOTLIGHT PICK

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## Awards & Accolades:

Singled out by Essence Magazine (August '07) in its list of sexy things to try out at home. ("*Try Something New Tonight*", Jeannine Amber).

Village Voice Annual Sexy Gift Guide- After combing catalogs and the web, and testing dozens of products, *Afrodite Superstar* was recommended by Tristan Taormino as one of her holiday season's top picks.

Simone Valentino: "Best New Star" for her leading role in *AfroDite Superstar*, presented by *Feminist Porn Awards, Toronto* – June 2007

Nominated for seven AVN (Adult Video News) awards including best feature, best screenplay and best director, and walked away with the award for Best Music. Held each year in Las Vegas, the AVN awards are the adult industries equivalent to the Oscars.

## Viewers:

"I never got a chance to say how much I enjoyed *Afrodite Superstar*. It was quite unique in the genre ... The humor and splendid writing was a breath of fresh air ... Simone was marvelous and played her role flawlessly."

- Terry Williams  
Professor of Sociology  
New School for Social Research

"This should be on *Showtime, HBO* or *Black Stars*. I liked it a lot. Please make more. It is nice to see black people this way. It's about time."

- George Winstead

"As a young man of color, I was impressed. The film portrayed our women in such a beautiful, classy yet stimulating light that I never thought was possible. I can't describe it any other way but as a work of art... Finally, I own an adult film that I can actually display with my other movies rather than tuck away underneath my bed, and can actually enjoy with my partner. Thanks!"

- Jose

"*Afrodite Superstar* is a breakthrough in adult filmmaking. (It) manages to capture its performers acting as real people without resorting to the usual stereotypes and "thug"

imagery too often found in portrayals of blacks and African-Americans, particularly in and around the Hip Hop industry... An interesting story, erotic sexual performances, good character presence, and a presentation of diversity that is sadly missing from most mainstream products.”

- *Lawrence Siegel, MA, CST, AASECT*  
*Clinical Sexologist*  
*President, Sage Institute for Family Development*

“Thank you for creating this film. It is a wonderful step in the direction I'd always hoped to witness. I don't think I've ever seen anything quite like it. I even think I felt a nod to *Spike Lee* and *Love Jones* in the production element...I also thought of *Mahogany*, that first Robert Townsend film and The *L Word* series. The final sex scene was heightened dramatically because of the character development. That was a fantastic and beautiful scene! I felt as if I were watching in indie film with explicit shots. I can't say enough. I am eagerly awaiting the next one!”

- *H. A.*  
*New Jersey*

“It's nice to see women and men of color portrayed in such a respectful, yet erotic light. Thanks for your efforts.”

- *Niki*

“*Afrodite Superstar* was a brilliant and unique film. I was at the premier at the *New School for Social Research* and later purchased the film. My boyfriend was excited that we were going to watch porn. However, as the film went on, I was surprised to hear him say that it had been mislabeled as porn. I totally agree. This was definitely an art film, like my other favorite, *Shortbus*, that contained sexual content. The film should be released as an indie film and not ghettoized as porn. I think that many people who are missing it would enjoy it...this was a marvelous film-- beautiful colors and women. I very much enjoyed it!”

- *Shanna Katz*  
*AASECT Member (American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors & Therapists)*  
*Master's Student in Human Sexuality*

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## Interview with Director Abiola Abrams

**As a feminist and university graduate, why did you do this film?**

I am an independent filmmaker, storyteller and artist. I wanted to create an intelligent and non-pornographic, non-exploitative film to raise sexual self-esteem that features characters of color and would be uplifting instead of degrading. Like most filmmakers such as Spike Lee, Woody Allen and Martin

Scorsese, most of my work explores similar themes over and over again. All of my work explores the concept of identity, of being a young woman of color, and trying to be more than we are. This film just explores it with issues of sensuality and beauty. Previous works explore self-worth with mental health and other themes.

Like the bestselling author Zane, I feel that it is important for us to open this sexual conversation in communities of color, where our silence literally equals death as women of color continue to be the fastest growing group diagnosed with HIV and AIDS. I wanted to create something intelligent, sexy and entertaining by women for women. This was a challenge that as an artist, scholar and activist I wanted to conquer. It grew directly out of my healing Goddess Power workshops with victims of multiple abuses including incest who had lost a sense of their sexual selves.

### **How did you choose your stage name?**

I chose the name Venus Hottentot in salute Sarah Saartjie Baartman also known as The Hottentot Venus, a South African woman who was kidnapped and sexually exploited in the 19th century. My attempt is to reclaim her sexual voice, power, and the voice of all of us. Women of color are over-sexualized in our society. Our bodies are everywhere, but our voices are absent. I made this film to present our voice in this arena.

### **Any thoughts on your casting process?**

Physical image after acting ability definitely came into play in my lengthy casting process. All of the black women are different shades of dark brown. That is very rare—if you look at our music videos, only black women or women of color who approximate the look of Caucasians are seen as beautiful. It was key for me to show natural African hair as beautiful.

In terms of casting, the film co-stars Mr. Marcus. The funny thing is that I am not a porn consumer so (fortunately or unfortunately) I had never ever heard of him before. The same goes for India, who is now a rapper. It was fantastic for me, as a director, to give them opportunities and hold them up to standards that people may not have thought they were capable of.

I discovered Simone Valentino at a university symposium on sexual media and Justin Long through his agent. Actress Trina Asidieu, the non-sexual talent, is a great discovery as well. They were all intelligent, supportive, dedicated and hard working-- studying their lines, going to acting classes, and being committed. I am extremely proud of them. They did a great job for non-actors.

### **What was your film process?**

Our film process was writing, re-writing and revising a script, casting and extensive rehearsals, and original music production. In rehearsals, I basically gave each of the actors mini acting lessons. It was also key to me that people stay on book. For the most part, no improvisation was permitted, except during the sex scenes of course.

### **Do you have any regrets?**

I feel that I fell short in my quest to portray women of different body types because of the talent available to me. Several people have asked why I chose not to cover the stretch marks on my main character Simone Valentino, who is otherwise a perfect beauty. Real women have stretch marks and we are

beautiful because of them, not in spite of them. Our bodies tell the story of our journeys. I also tried to cast women with only real body parts including breasts, although I do respect women's rights to do whatever they wish to their own bodies. In addition, the film was more explicit than I would have preferred because of the financial obligations of being a corporate artist. There was also much more to the story which was devastating to cut, but ultimately, with a low budget and short shooting schedule, my producer had to focus on our deliverables, which was to make sure that the sex scenes were in the can. Overall though, I am proud of having the guts to make this work. There are many people who call themselves artists, but they are not willing to risk falling or failing. True artists operate on the edge. I hope to inspire discussion about sexual representation, and then move on to other topics and themes.

### **How did you hook up with Candida Royalle?**

I found Candida Royalle and Femme Productions through her website where she specified that she was looking to give opportunities to young female filmmakers. Although I had never considered shooting a sexual film before it was a great opportunity. People can't conceive of it but I pitched it as a regular movie where the sex is real, and wrote a short script. Although I've made other narrative films before, she is the first person to trust me with a larger budget. I approached the work as I did any other—a safe set with a polished and sophisticated crew of mostly women. It was great working with her because sexuality is not my principal field as an artist or activist. This is my one foray into this work, and I couldn't have had a better guide.

### **What's the difference between pornography and erotica?**

Pornography signifies exploitation. Our film is a very positive sexy enterprise made by women for women with a strong message. Call it whatever you want, just see it and tell your friends about it. People who come to AfroDite Superstar seeking pornography will be disappointed. Let's not talk about terminology. Let's talk about why women of color are the fastest growing group of people dying of AIDS and HIV. This war has many fronts. We need preachers, abstinence activists, and artists. Female genital circumcision is done to remove pleasure so that women feel powerless. So is silencing women's sexual voices and exploiting and owning our bodies.

### **That sounds great—so why direct the film anonymously?**

It's very hip hop to have a tag or pseudonym, and I didn't want this work to conflict with anything else I was doing. I chose the name Venus Hottentot to commemorate the life of a forgotten South African woman who was sexually exploited in Europe in the nineteenth century. I made the film to empower women. That's why I have chosen to come out now as a part of a motivational movement called Dare to Be a B.A.D. Girl – Beautiful and Daring. I have an amazing fan base, and I want to be honest with them. If I am telling them to be B.A.D. – beautiful and daring, I have to dare to do the same.

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## **Background**

Candida Royalle's **Femme Productions®** has launched a new line of erotic films for couples featuring a more ethnically diverse cast of actors and actresses, directed by women of color.

According to a study on African American women commissioned by Essence

Communications Partners (ECP), publishers of Essence Magazine, ethnic women remain a largely untapped market.

A quick survey of available adult movies that feature people of color will also reveal that ethnic women and couples are seriously underserved in terms of providing high quality erotic films that are intelligent and reflective of their lifestyles and needs. Most of what is out there is often a caricature of black and Latino sexuality bordering on insulting and racist depictions.

**Femme Chocolat®** aims to change that. By placing the reins of production directly in their hands, we seek to empower women of color by giving them a place to share their unique vision of their own sexuality with all who seek to observe, learn and enjoy.

**Femme Chocolat®** is proud to introduce our first erotic feature, ***AfroDite Superstar***, directed by Venus Hottentot, and released by *Adam & Eve Pictures*.

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