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Mary Akpa

“Black Body” expresses the duality of the Black Experience: the weight of pervasive systematic racism and aggressions; and the resilience, and majesty of blackness. It’s as if there’s a kingdom right in the center of our being, that everything around is determined to suppress. I’ve collected stories and conversations, and this song is the soundtrack. Black Body is more than just a song. It’s our song, it’s a movement. **#ourblackbody**

About

MARY AKPA IS NO STRANGER TO THE UNCHARTED PATH.

With a pop career outlined for her as an artist with Arista / LaFace Records, she chose instead to follow her love of jazz and world music. Her degree in Ethnomusicology from the University of California, Los Angeles deepened her fascination with music of non-Western cultures. She eventually became an independent artist centering her music on what matters to her most - truth, Black culture and liberation, love, and social justice.

For Mary, music is *iko nsi oma* (Igbo for magical spell). Deeply inspired by community and heritage, Mary conjures sounds to connect and transport audiences. As a musical alchemist, she stirs jazz, soul, trip hop, and diasporic elements into her body of work. Whether the audience is 10 or 1,000, Mary meets each stage with a craving to create *iko nsi oma*. Her musical influences span from Nina Simone, Sade, and Papa Wemba, to Alice Coltrane, Radiohead and Outkast.

Mary's identity is clearly woven into her musical expression. At the intersection of being Black, Nigerian, and a woman, her experience is the central premise of her creativity. As an artist committed to social change, Mary co-founded Naija Girl Tribe: a non-profit supporting Nigerian girls through mentorship, personal and career development, and peer-focused counseling. She creates community through a conversation series she created as a safe space to discuss Black love, liberation, and the barriers against it.

On Sunday, July 5th, Mary is offering her newest song entitled "Black Body" – an expression of Black existence. The song will be followed by a video short featuring a range of perspectives. These two mediums create a lyrical and visual expression of what it's like to live in a Black body. As her musical influence Nina Simone once said, an artist's duty, as far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times," this project – like all of Mary's work – does just that.

"Black Body" is more than Mary's story. "Black Body" is your story. It's ours.

Listen, watch, share, and join the conversation.



Media



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