

# “Look What the Bride Has Got On!”: A Visual Discourse Analysis of Uganda’s Wedding Industry

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## Background

This project seeks to analyze how ideas of beauty and identity are imbued onto the bodies of brides by:

- Underscoring the wedding as a site where conceptions of nationality and femininity are played out.
- Analyzing the role women play in representing and embodying the nation.



Bride & Groom Expo Advertisement, 2016



Bride & Groom Expo Advertisement, 2010

## Research Questions

What is the form and nature of Uganda’s wedding industry?  
What ideals of race, class, gender and sexuality are embodied on the bodies of featured brides?

## Methods and Materials

This project focuses on the presentations and constructions of identity through Uganda's luxury industries. Following Rose (2016), I analyze more than 2,000 image from the last 20 years of fashion coverage in *The New Vision* as well as advertisements from the Bride & Groom Expo in order to underscore the ways in which ideas of beauty, race, class and sexuality are imbued onto the bodies of featured brides.



Bride & Groom Expo, 2016

## Preliminary Results

Idealized formations of beauty, race, class and sexuality construct the ideal bride—and woman—in these images. Through negotiations with a colonial past and active participation in a rapidly globalizing world, Ugandan designers and consumers project ideas of femininity that both conform to and contest traditional ideas of womanhood through the bodies of featured brides by:

- Using the white wedding dress as a symbol of status in Ugandan society.
- Modifying the white wedding dress to fit Ugandan styles and aesthetics.

## Expected Outcomes

By conducting a visual discourse analysis, this project will analyze images surrounding Uganda’s wedding industry in order to highlight the role of women within conceptions of femininity and nationalism. This project will evolve into a critical analysis of idealized femininities and conceptions of nationalisms in the Global South with a particular emphasis on Africa and Latin America.

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## References

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Bride & Groom Magazine Website  
Rose, G., ed. 2016. *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London: SAGE Publications.