Art Exhibit Encourages People to Learn More About Black Women's Tresses

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Would you let a total stranger touch your hair? That's just what a group of African-American women did for a novel interactive art exhibit organized by Un'ruly and held in New York City's Union Square, according to a story published by The Root.

Un'ruly is a website that focuses on socio-cultural issues that affect the black community. The exhibit was dubbed "You Can Touch My Hair," the phrase written on the signs held by each of the three women. Each woman sported tresses of different textures of African-American hair. One woman wore her unrelaxed mane in a blown-out, face-framing hairdo; the other in long, coiled locks; and the third sported shiny, shoulder-length straightened hair. As curious onlookers gathered, the women would wave their signs inviting people to approach them and reach out to touch their tresses and ask any questions they might have about black women's hair.

According to Antonia Opiah, the founder of Un'ruly, the goal of the exhibit was to spark a dialogue about the purported fascination other races have with black women's hair. "Some have welcomed it as a much needed discussion, while others dub it a human petting zoo," Opiah commented on her site.

The event quickly became controversial and triggered a lively online debate and discussion about the wisdom and appropriateness of the exhibit.

Interestingly, a recent marketing survey showed that more black women are opting out of using hair relaxers and choosing to wear their hair natural.

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