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VisualGPS

Black Girls in Britain Visual Guidelines

Your guide to choosing the right visuals

About VisualGPS

Our Methodology

The power of visuals to question stereotypes, connect with consumers and drive towards action is undeniable. VisualGPS helps you cut to the core of how today's consumers think and feel and find the images and videos that will connect with your audience.

DEEP CONSUMER INSIGHTS

Partnering with a world-class global research firm, Marketcast, VisualGPS conducts extensive and ongoing consumer research to track shifts in consumer needs. Our surveys cover diverse topics, exploring attitudes, behaviors, and preferences across various concepts

Explore VisualGPS ➔

Creative Expertise and Analysis

Our award-winning creative team of 60+ experts brings nearly 30 years of experience in visual trend analysis and guidance, informing both Getty Images content creators and customers on what connects with consumers

SEARCH AND DOWNLOAD DATA

With access to a staggering 2.7 billion annual searches and insights derived from millions of images and videos licensed by nearly one million global customers, VisualGPS provides both macro and micro-level perspectives on content usage across diverse mediums, subjects, and industry sectors.

Meet the Team ➔

Let Black Girls Be Girls

Let Black Girls Be Girls is the campaign by UK creatives Eboni Lamine and Martha Omasoro to raise awareness around adultification bias, a pervasive issue that affects how society perceives and treats Black girls.

Adultification bias involves viewing Black girls as more adult-like than they truly are which can impact the way they are treated, often denying them the empathy and care that all children deserve.

Research from Getty Images reveals that Black girls feature in a mere 0.26% of visuals most downloaded by customers in the UK and are four times less likely to be represented than white girls.

To support media, agencies and brands in more accurately representing Black girls, Getty Images has collaborated with Lamine and Omasoro to create this first-of-its-kind visual guidelines for marketers and creatives on how to choose and create visuals that accurately represent Black British girls.

Leveraging Getty Images' VisualGPS research, the guide is designed to serve as a ready-to-use roadmap with actionable insights. These include the different subsections of Black British identities such as ethnicity, age, religion, region and body types and creating visual storytelling that celebrates the energy, innocence, and joyfulness amongst Black British girl communities.

The impact of adultification bias

Adultification is based on intersecting prejudices, including systemic inequalities that disproportionately affect marginalised communities.

Adultification bias for Black girls is not new and more awareness and action is needed. Language used to describe Black girls such as 'aggressive', 'resilient', and 'mature'* has a negative impact.

This type of language is normalised with harmful assumptions and stereotypes associated with it. While adultification bias can impact all children, it is important to acknowledge that it specifically affects Black children in certain ways.

Source: *Adultification bias within child protection and safeguarding Report by Jahnine Davis.

Key aspects of adultification bias impacting Black girls include:

‣ **Perceived Maturity:** Black girls are often viewed as being more knowledgeable about adult topics, less innocent, and more independent than their other counterparts. This can result in a lack of empathy and understanding from adults, including teachers and law enforcement.

‣ **Harsher Discipline:** Due to these perceptions, Black girls are more likely to face harsher disciplinary actions in school and other settings. They are more frequently suspended, expelled*, or referred to law enforcement for behaviour that might be overlooked or handled with less severe consequences for other children.

‣ **Impact on Development:** The unfair treatment stemming from adultification bias can have long-term negative effects on the emotional and psychological development of Black girls. It can lead to lower self-esteem, increased stress, and a heightened sense of vulnerability.

‣ **Lack of Support:** The belief that Black girls are more self-sufficient can result in them receiving less support and guidance from adults, which is crucial for their growth and development.

Source: Agenda Alliance

Who are Black British?

According to the Ethnic Group 2021 Census for people and households in England and Wales*, the term "Black British" encompasses a diverse range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds across Africa and the Caribbean.

Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African:

- Black African
- Black Caribbean
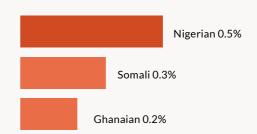- Other Black backgrounds

Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups:

- White and Black African
- White and Black Caribbean
- Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups

Diverse Cultures within Black Communities in the UK

The new write-in response option for "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: "African" has allowed insights into specific African backgrounds. The largest ethnic groups specified within this write-in included:

Nigerian 0.5%

Somali 0.3%

Ghanaian 0.2%

Regionally, the largest Black communities are in London (49.3%) and the West Midlands (11.2%).

*Source: Ethnic Group, England and Wales: Census 2021

Authenticity &
Black British girlhood

Getty Images VisualGPS research reveals that 'authentic visuals' are pivotal in building brand trust for 97% of British consumers who relate most to visuals that look like them and their everyday lives.

Meaning authentic visual storytelling that reflects diversity within Black British girlhood cultures is important to connect with UK consumers.

Analysis of visuals most popular with UK customers in the last 12 months reveals significant visibility gaps:

‣ Only **0.26%** of visuals feature Black girls at all.

‣ Within that, less than **1%** of visuals show Black girls with different body types and abilities.

‣ Within that, **53%** feature Black girls who are lighter skinned, have a loose curl pattern hair and of a slim build.

‣ Skin conditions such as vitiligo, eczema, acne or freckles are rarely seen.

Representation within the Black British girlhood community is more than a matter of visibility—it's about celebrating the rich diversity of Black African and Black Caribbean cultures, skin complexions, and hair textures.

Points to consider:

‣ Are you showing a range of hair textures? For example, afros, braids, curls, locs, and natural textures.

‣ Have you considered the representation of people with different skin conditions?

‣ Are you representing Black girls with all body shapes, sizes and abilities to challenging narrow beauty standards for Black girls?

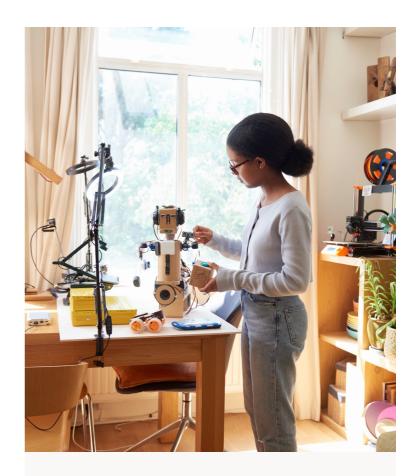‣ Are you representing Black British styling and fashion cultures?

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Black British girls and all ages

Where Black girls are represented, they are most likely to skew younger and there are starker visibility gaps as age increases for Black girls.

Analysis of visuals most popular with UK customers in the last 12 months show one-dimensional representations of teens and tweens.

‣ Teenage Black girls are **x3 times** less likely to be represented than 5-year-olds.

‣ **99%** of visuals show Black mid-teens in education and school environments with little representation of life and relationships outside of school.

‣ Less than **1%** of visuals show changing interests, passions, hobbies and peer groups for tweens between childhood and adolescence aged between 8-12 years)

From the innocence of early childhood to the discovery of adolescence, visually representing the multi-dimensional lives of Black British girls of all ages within their communities is key.

Points to consider:

‣ Are you visualising Black girls in diverse friendship groups?

‣ Are you focusing on tweens and teens, participating in sports, leisure activities and interests with their friends or families? Are you showing them outside of school?

‣ Are you accurately reflecting Black British style for different age groups?

‣ Are you representing Black girls of all ages alongside other intersections of their identities (e.g., religion)?

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Family values in Black African and Caribbean communities

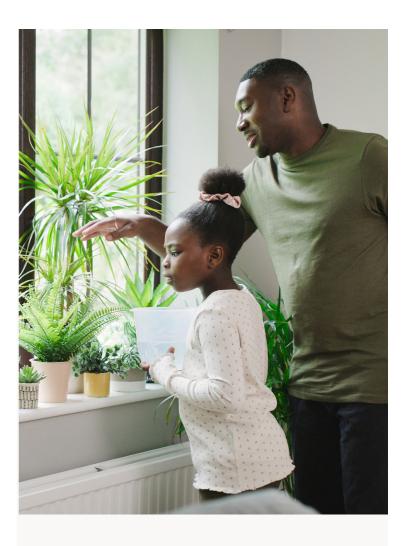**Both Black African and Caribbean cultures value the strength of the family household and family values.**

This includes multigenerational family members or their extended families, often living close by.

Visuals most popular with UK customers in the last 12 months reveals key stereotypes around Black families:

- Black girls are **x2 times** less likely to be seen with fathers than mothers.

- Only younger Black girls are seen with family, either with single fathers, single mothers or nuclear families.

- Depictions of Black girls' main interaction with fathers' centres on having fun vs. learning life skills from mothers

- Less than **1%** of visuals show Black girls with older and younger parents, with extended family or in same-sex families.

Family culture holds a special place in Black African and Black Caribbean communities, where respect for elders and the value of learning are deeply ingrained.

Points to consider:

- Are you showing various family members engaging in daily activities in a shared home? (e.g. grandparents, siblings, extended families)

- Are you considering different types of family households that are reflective of Black British girls' experiences? (e.g. different types of family units, younger and older parents, different socio-economic backgrounds, rural vs urban etc.)

- Are you depicting family bonding outside the home? (e.g. day-trips, leisure activities, community building experiences, day-to-day activities like shopping, going to the doctors, playing with pets etc.)

- Are you showing a range of cultural celebrations or faiths within the Black British African and Caribbean communities? (e.g., Eid, Christmas, and Rastafarian culture)

- Are fathers of older Black British girls considered in your visuals? What activities are they engaged in?

Representing Black British girls with an inclusive lens

Different faiths
Show visuals that represent Black girls both within and outside of their religious practice. Think about visuals that show cultural nuances and traditions within the Black African and Black Caribbean communities. (e.g., Eid, Christmas, and Rastafarian culture)

Ethnicity
Don't forget to represent Black British girls of all ethnic backgrounds across the UK.

Disability
Black girls with disabilities are vastly under-represented and should be represented across a full spectrum of abilities.

Relationships
Show more authentic stories around family life, including different socioeconomic backgrounds and extended families as well as peers and friends.

Visualising every body
Consider a range of body types and shapes as well as skin colour, hair textures and skin conditions.

All ages
Feature Black British girls of all ages in their daily lives, at home, at school and within their communities.

🔍 **Search for keywords...**

Black British girls	Joy
Caribbean culture	Playful
African culture	Togetherness
Black family	Bonding
African ethnicity	Celebration
Inclusion	Sport
Disability	Friendship
Black British community	BBC kids collection

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