



Photographs by Stuart Isett for The New York Times

POSSESSED

A Mask? Smmmokin!

By DAVID COLMAN

THE mysteries of love are so confusing that you can spend a lifetime unraveling them and still have a mess of string on your dying hands. Where does it come from? More important, where does it go? Is it any wonder that whole industries — psychotherapy, computer dating, opera — came along with the intent to parse (if only crudely) this most enthralling of subjects?

So who knows why, come wedding day, this man takes this woman while that man takes that man? The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing, said Pascal, and the heart has never been one to spill the beans. So it's hard for Jean-Paul Goude to explain why he finds the faces of African and Asian women so overwhelmingly beautiful. "It's definitely the type of beauty that I am attracted to," he said. "I love flaring nostrils, brown skin, full lips, slanted eyes."

He is full of theories on his love's origins, from his dance-instructor mother impressing upon him, he said, "the equation between being a good dancer and being African-American," to his earliest heroes, the black jazz musicians of the 40's and 50's, like Count Basie and Duke Ellington.

But Mr. Goude, the art director and photographer who pioneered the art of photo ma-

nipulation in the 1970's and 1980's with the help of his most famous subject and first wife, Grace Jones, has also learned that pontificating too freely on his passion can lead to trouble.

In his first book, "Jungle Fever," published in 1982 (Xavier Moreau), he referred to his passions in candid terms that some found offensive. "I expressed myself in a clumsy way," he said, adding that in trying to be cute, he used the "n" word "all the time — I thought that since Grace was the mother of my first son, I was entitled."

Apparently not. Several black students at the University of California, Berkeley, wrote to him, angry over his comments, he said. He even alienated some of his former fans in fashion. "I got a letter from André Leon Talley calling me a racist pig," he said, referring to the Vogue editor, who is African-American.

In his second book, "So Far So Goude" (Assouline, \$65), which illuminates his work at Esquire in the 1970's and with Ms. Jones in the 1980's, he exercises more caution, but the love remains undimmed. "I'll always be the way I am," he said. Of his current wife,



A QUESTION OF PROPORTION Jean-Paul Goude bought his mask last year in South Korea.

Karen Park Goude, a Korean-American former fashion editor, he said, "I look at her face, and it fills me with pleasure."

And when asked to talk about one of his favorite objects, the first that came to mind was one of the inexpensive, machine-made,

hand-painted masks he bought for the equivalent of a couple dollars in a gift shop on a visit to South Korea last year. "It's not as complicated as the Chinese masks, not as minimalist as the Japanese ones — it's Korean," he said, with characteristically sweeping generality. "It's about the features, which on these masks are as Korean as the African ones are African. It's a question of proportion."

Whether Koreans would agree is an open question. As for the mask, it can't hurt that the cartoonish colors and design of the mask pop against the black background in a way that recalls Mr. Goude's heyday in the 1980's, when African and Asian influences ran riot through high fashion and art. And its cheery, slightly lunatic look recalls Mr. Goude's attitude that even the most serious things — like love, passion, art — can't be taken too seriously. They're far too important.