

MO'NIQUE

BY DIANE RENEE

“When you see me walk into the room you say, ‘Damn, she’s gorgeous,’ because that oozes out of me. And because I believe it, you can’t help but to believe it,” Mo’Nique says with the assurance of a woman who knows that her beauty ain’t nothing but the truth. And it is. Did you not see her at the 2002 NAACP Image Awards? Home-girl accepted the Outstanding Actress in a Comedy Series award (for her performance in *The Parkers*) wearing a tight, silver-and-black dress that pushed her boobs up and out and accentuated every ounce of her blubber. To those who deemed her clothing choice inappropriate given her 200-plus poundage, she quickly and unabashedly responds, “Fuck ‘em.”

“I don’t owe you an explanation for why I wear what I wear,” says Mo’Nique, nee Monique Imes. “I like my body. I like to accentuate it. I like when I have my shirt on and you can see a little cleavage,” she adds. “I’m sexy, glamorous, pretty and all of that. I know that about me.”

Please don’t get it twisted. This is more than just confidence that Mo’Nique speaks; it’s how she’s been conditioned. The Baltimore native’s parents instilled in her that she was not to be some sideline life spectator just because she had a little weight on her. No sirree. Instead, she was raised to know that when she walks into a room, she is going to turn heads. Not because of her size, but because of her dynamic personality and outward beauty. What’s more, this chick got jokes, okay? She’s just one funny-ass woman.

“Fat bitches should only hang with fat bitches,” Mo’Nique says in *The Queens of Comedy*, the Showtime network’s film featuring four of the hottest African-American comediennees. “A skinny bitch can not appreciate our fat asses. A skinny bitch will try to fuck with your self-esteem. Try to make you do shit she know you can’t do,” she says. “Take you to the mall and walk all fast.”

It’s that brand of honesty and unwavering self-acceptance that has put her career on hyperspeed. With her hit show going into its fourth season, sold-out comedy shows around the country, movie roles (including parts in *Baby Boy*, *Two Can Play That Game*, and *3 Strikes*), her own clothing line for large-sized women called Mo’Nique’s BBLI (it stands for “big, beautiful and lovin’ it”), and an upcoming book titled *Skinny Women are Evil*, Mo’Nique is most definitely challenging the fat girl stereotype. Better yet, she’s stomping the hell out of the beauty myth and leaving her mark of portly sex appeal all over it.

Whether Hollywood likes it or not, the new world order according to Mo’Nique calls for big women to step out of thin women’s shadows. “I get frustrated when I hear women (especially black women) say, ‘Girl, why you making it look like it’s okay to be big?’” she says. “We’ve bought into other people’s stuff. Oh God, if I’m not a size two, then men are not going to look at me. Well, every man I know wants something with some meat on it. Cause only a dog wants a bone. And he only wants to lick up on that.”

Well, that’s Mo’Nique for you. Sexy. Smart. Bold. Honest. Real. And fat. “Get used to it, because I ain’t going to change,” she says. But you better believe she’s got a little more to say. “You hear what I’m sayin’? Every man you see, he want a woman that can take care of him. And once you go fat

