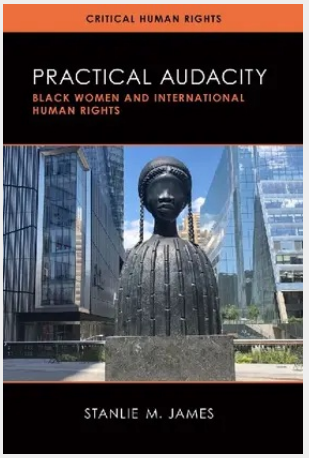
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Practical Audacity

Black Women and International Human Rights



Goler Teal Butcher (1925–93), a towering figure in international human rights law, was a scholar and advocate who advanced an intersectional approach to human empowerment influenced by Black women's intellectual traditions. Practical Audacity follows the stories of fourteen women whose work honors and furthers Butcher's legacy. Their multilayered and sophisticated contributions have critically reshaped human rights scholarship and activism—including their major role in developing critical race feminism, community-based applications, and expanding the boundaries of human rights discourse. Stanlie M. James weaves narratives by and about these women throughout the history of the field, illustrating how they conceptualize, develop, and implement human rights. By centering the courage and innovative interventions of capable and visionary Black women, she places them rightfully alongside such figures as Thurgood Marshall and Charles Hamilton Houston. This volume fundamentally shifts the frame through which human rights struggles are understood, illuminating how those who witness and experience oppression have made some of the biggest contributions to building a better world.

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