

## Art

## 9 women raise issues once off-limits

By Edward J. Sozanski  
INQUIRER ART CRITIC

**W**omen on the Verge," at the African American Museum in Philadelphia, presents work by nine young black women, some of which ventures into territory that not too long ago would have been considered off-limits.

In each case, the artist in question addresses contentious issues — the role of women in Islam, the aftermath of rape, and the ultimate outrage perpetrated against African Americans, lynching.

Nzingah Muhammad looks at Islamic women through color photography. Her suite of large-scale photographs, all of ordinary daily situations, communicate dignity and strength.

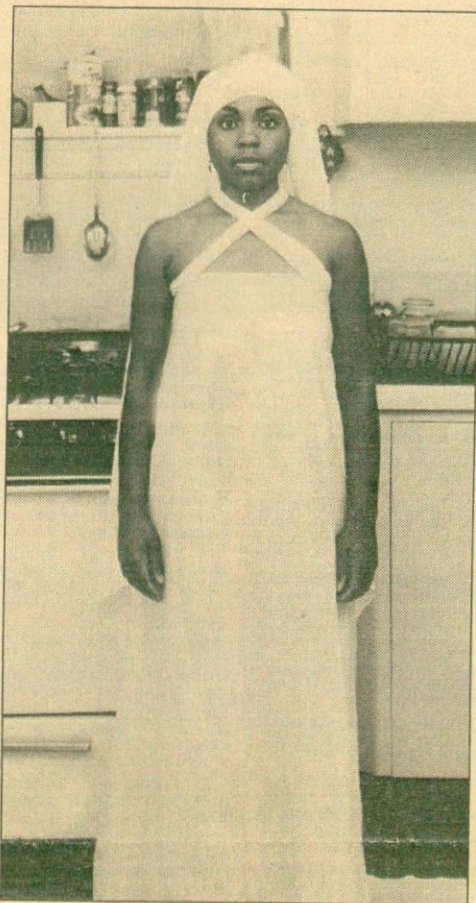
Aishah Shahidah Simmons takes on the consequences of rape in a video documentary called *No!*, still in progress. The tape consists of interviews with rape victims that are not so much shocking as cathartic in the way the women are willing to relive past traumas.

The most powerful piece in the show is an installation by Kim Mayhorn about the lynching of black women. Worn print dresses hang on nooses from branches over a ground cover of dead leaves.

Each dress refers to a specific lynching, in one case of a pregnant woman, in another of a woman lynched after being raped. The outrage in this piece is coiled like a steel spring waiting to be triggered.

+ This is an uneven show; the work that isn't as openly polemical tends to be the weakest. But it releases voices that have been still too long, and that need to be heard.

African American Museum in Philadelphia, 701 Arch St. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 5 p.m. Sundays.



Nzingah Muhammad's "Untitled" is part of a suite at the African American Museum.

Juror Therese Mulligan, curator at George Eastman House in Rochester, selected 65 pieces from more than 950 submitted. The hallmark of her show is its evenness. Nothing is exceptional, but everything seems to belong.

In large juried shows, one tends to look for novelty, which can impart structure to what otherwise would be a bazaar.

Several artists offer it in different flavors. Yoshi Sugitatsu frames a bicyclist in a floating soap bubble. It's a gimmick, but one that gives an ordinary picture a surreal edge.

In her ink-jet prints, Alexandra Broches combines children's drawings with pictures of structures in the landscape such as a bulbous water tower. The combinations make each element slightly ominous.

Cheryl Sorg's color pictures of beauty products such as lipstick set out in Petri dishes like specimens make the "science" of cosmetology seem something like witchcraft.

Sara Rytteke's dig at fashion and beauty culture takes the form of contrived magazine covers that frame this obsession as threatening to children. In a Cindy-Sherman-like touch, one model poses for eight covers, and her appearance differs in each.

There's also some good straight photography. Look for Ken Royster's photograph of an immersion baptism and a portrait of a noble African woman by Peter Miraglia.

The Print Center, 1614 Latimer St. Hours: 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. Through May 6. Phone: 215-735-6090.

**Three travelers.** Three of More Gallery's artists have been traveling, and in each case the experience has produced a depression or per-

♿ Indicates wheelchair-accessible.

♻ Indicates assistive listening devices.

## Art Museums

**Allentown Art Museum** 5th & Court Sts, Allentown; 610-432-4333. www.allentownartmuseum.org ♿ "A Glorious Spring in Edo: Japanese Prints": works of the woodblock print artists from the Edo Period. Closes 6/25. "100 Masterpieces from the Vitra Design Museum Collection": objects by 20th century artists, including Charles and Ray Eames, Frank O Gehry, Philippe Starck, Marcel Breuer, others. Closes Sun. "Synaptic Response": agri-sculptures (constructions made with farm tools) by Jamie Perkins. Closes 5/21. • European painting collection; American paintings & international textile collection; Frank Lloyd Wright library from the Francis Little home. \$4; \$3 seniors; \$2 students; free for ages 12 & under; free Suns. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Tues-Sats; noon-5 p.m. Suns.

**The Art Museum of Princeton University** Middle of campus, behind Nassau Hall, Princeton; 609-258-3787. "The Responsive Eye: Optical Art from the Collection". Closes 4/23. Photographs of hunters and champion trees by Barbara Bosworth. Closes 6/18. "Curators' Choice": recent acquisitions. Closes 6/6. "The Dawn of Maya Kings": an early Maya stela. Closes 7/30. "Flora and Fauna in Chinese Painting." Closes 7/30. • Permanent collection ranges from ancient to contemporary art to Greek and Roman antiquities and pre-Columbian art. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tues-Sats, 1-5 p.m. Suns.

**Barnes Foundation** 300 N Latches Lane, (2 blocks north of the intersection of 54th St & City Line Ave), Merion; 610-667-0290. ♿ Works by Monet, Renoir, Cezanne, Rousseau, Matisse, Van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, other impressionist and post-impressionist paintings, African art and Pennsylvania