



WOMEN ON THE RISE!

TEACHING INSTRUCTIONS: Iona Rozeal Brown

THEMES:

- Hip Hop culture
- Blackface minstrelsy
- “Ganguaro” girls
- Japanese art (Ukiyo-e prints)
- Appropriation

FEATURED WORKS:

Images from the *a3 blackface* series (2002)

RESOURCES:

Links to images

- <http://www.spelman.edu/bush-hewlett/a3/gallery.html>
- <http://www.artnet.com/artist/171350/iona-rozeal-brown.html>
- <http://www.artnet.com/magazine/features/finch/finch1-9-04.asp>
- <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0DE7D61639F937A35757C0A9629C8B63>

Books

- *Black Belt* by Christine Y. Kim (2003): Studio Museum in Harlem
- *Bamboozled* film by Spike Lee (2000): Explores the legacy of blackface minstrelsy

DISCUSSION POINTS AND QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

- Show a segment from Spike Lee’s film *Bamboozled* so that students can understand what blackface minstrelsy was like. (Optional) Generate discussion questions based on the selected clip(s).
- Show students images of “ganguaro” girls from Internet. Pre-select a few through an online search.
- What do you think about the “ganguaro” phenomenon? Do you think it could be offensive to African Americans?
- Distribute segments of student responses to the *a3 blackface* series from the Spellman College Virtual Museum site: <http://www.spelman.edu/bush-hewlett/a3/students.html> (Optional) Generate questions based on these responses.
- Could Brown’s approach to mimicking Japanese artistic style also be seen as offensive to Japanese culture?
- How would you describe the way that Brown’s paintings represent Hip Hop culture?

MATERIALS FOR HANDS-ON PROJECT: Iona Rozeal Brown

Ukiyo-e Re-Mixed

- Templates of Ukiyo-e designs (especially of women). Examples of good resources for this are *Women of the Ukiyo-e* and *Japanese Fashions* by Ming-Ju Sun (Published by Dover Pictorial Archives) and available on Amazon.com.
- Markers
- Heavy paper
- Scissors/Exacto knife (for older students)
- Glue
- Photocopies of designer logos and accessories such as earrings and Kangol hats

PROCEDURE FOR HANDS-ON PROJECT:

Inspired by the *a3 blackface* series, students will create collages that combine Hip Hop styles and symbols with Japanese art.

- Instructor will create photocopies of Hip Hop designs and Ukiyo-e templates
- Students will choose a Japanese style template and glue it to a piece of heavy paper
- Students will choose accessories they would like to add to the image (they should also be encouraged to draw/design some of their own)
- Students will apply the logos/accessories to the figure in their template using glue
- Students will add color to the image with markers

APPLICABLE NATIONAL VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS (GRADES 5 -12):

- NA—VA.5-8.1 (9-12.1): Understanding and Applying Media, Techniques, and Processes
- NA—VA.5-8.3 (9-12.3): Choosing and Evaluating A Range of Subject Matter, Symbols, and Ideas
- NA—VA.5-8.4 (9-12.4): Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Cultures



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STUDENT HAND OUT: Iona Rozeal Brown

Iona Rozeal Brown (b. 1966—Washington D.C.)

Iona Rozeal Brown is an artist and DJ based in New York. The paintings for which she is best known were inspired by a visit to Japan where she discovered a subculture of teenagers who practiced *ganguro*, or *blackface*. *Ganguro girls* use sunless tanners and tanning salons to darken their skin, do their hair up in cornrows and dress in hip-hop fashions.

The artist was surprised to find that Hip-Hop's influence had spread to Asia; she had mixed feelings about the *ganguro* craze. Although she was proud that African American music and style were so influential, she was unsettled by the manner in which the youth mimicked blackness. The artist's negative feelings toward *ganguro* are due to the 19th century tradition of blackface minstrelsy in America. Blackface minstrelsy was a style of performance in which white comedic actors painted their faces black and mimicked African-Americans in an demeaning manner.

Brown responded to the *ganguro* phenomenon through the *a3 blackface* series of paintings (2002) that blend the style of 18th Century Japanese *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints with contemporary hip-hop culture. The funky, elegant paintings make the viewer question their notions about culture as relating specifically to place. *Is hip-hop culture less valid in Japan than in New York or LA?*

Vocabulary

Ukiyo-e - Style of Japanese woodblock prints and paintings developed in the 17th century.