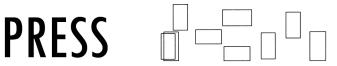
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The New York Times

TIMES'S CRITICS AND WRITERS TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT'S COMING SOON IN ART, POP MUSIC, TV

PART THREE

Arts&Leisure

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The New Season: Art

HOLLAND COTTER

Museums Depart From the Obvious

discoveries, old and new.

COMING AFTER A HO-HUM stretch in mu-seums, the 2013-14 art season promises an unusually interesting mix of material from the distant past and art that engages with a politically fraught present. As the months go by, we should get a sense of what our art institutions can do when they depart, even a little, from the obvious. The surprises start with what won't be

other shows take internationalism as their theme. The Met's "Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500-1800," culled from the museum's deep closets, is one (Sept. 16). Another is "Kongo Across the Waters," which opens on Oct. 22 at the Harn Museum at the University of Florida, Gainesville, and draws on little-studied archaeological material to document the rise of the powerful Kongo kingdom in West Africa, its early contacts with Europe, and its far-reaching influence on the history of the African-Americas.

African-American history is a natural fo-

African-American history is a natural fo-cus in a season that coincides with the half-century anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The subject is front and center



in "Witness: Art, Activism and Civil Rights" at the Brooklyn Museum (April 6 to Aug, 10). And it's implicit in "Tell It With Pride: the 54th Massachusetts Regiment and August Saint-Gaudens' Shaw Memorial' at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, This small show takes a close-up look at a sculptural homage to an ill-fated Union Army unit in the Civil War. Although the monument carries the name of the regiment's white leader, Robert Gould Shaw, the solders he led, and died with, were black (Sept. 15 to Jan. 20).

Reminders that the full achievement of civil rights — pertaining to race, class and sex — remains very much a work in

progress comes through in exhibitions of contemporary art. The photographer Carrie Mae Weems makes this the propelling theme of an extraordinary retrospective, encompassing three decades of African-haerican life, that arrives at the Guggenbeim on Jan. 24. In a very different way, Mangechi Mutu, a young artist born in East Africa, blends ethnicity, sexuality and colonialism in her fantastically inventive collages, seen at the Brooklyn Museum starting Oct. II.

All these elements will certainly figure



Clockwise from top, John F. Kennedy campaigning in 1960; Art Spiegelman, self-portrait from "Maus," 1989, Arm Reli quary of Saint Bernward German (Hildesheim), about 1194; Wangechi



Trayvon Martin and its aftermath. And politics is, inevitably, soaked into the fabric of the two-part "Radical Presences: Black Performance in Contemporary Art." Part 1 was scheduled to open at the Studio Museum in Harlem on Friday, and Part 2 at Grey Art Gallery, at New York University, on Nov. 14, when it will overlap with the run of Performa 13, New York City's performance art blennial (Nov. 1 to 24).

Performa itself, in its fifth edition this fall, would do well to take a lesson from another concurrent show, this one opening at the Whitney Museum of American Art on Ct. 31. Titled "Rituals of Rented Island: CONTINUED ON PAGE 56