

/ on exhibit /



« In this image by Lynsey Addario, a pregnant 14-year-old seeks refuge at a Congo medical shelter.

PHOTOS *for a* CAUSE

FORTY-SIX. That's the average life expectancy for a woman in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where sexual violence has affected tens of thousands during the country's ongoing civil war. To call attention to this crisis, Leslie Thomas, 44, founder of Art Works Projects (a nonprofit that exposes human rights abuses through art), and Jane M. Saks, 47, executive director of Columbia College Chicago's

Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media, have curated a two-year touring exhibition, "Congo/Women" (congowomen.org), which launches at the United Nations in this month.

Thirty-eight images by four photographers are on display, accompanied by informative essays. Thomas and Saks urge people "to look, learn and then act." Says Thomas: "One of the beautiful things about getting older is realizing you make choices every day by doing or not doing. You realize, OK, I only have a certain amount of time, so what do I want to do?"

—CARMELA CIURARU

/ tv /

The WENDY WILLIAMS Show



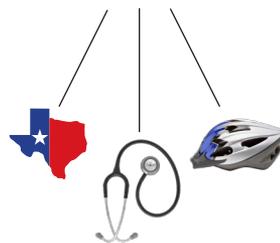
She is six foot three in heels, wears a size 14, and . . . you know what? She can take it from here. "I am not a short girl, I am not a white girl, and I am not a passive girl," talk show host Wendy Williams says. "Everything about me is big."

Williams, whose syndicated radio show made her one of the biggest mouths in the Big Apple, took her dream to daytime TV this summer. Dubbed "the anti Oprah" for her no-holds-barred questions, Williams, a New Jersey native,

says she's just trying to get to something real. "I apologize for none of my nosiness," she says, noting that she has been candid about her own weight problems, plastic surgery and drug addiction. "I've never asked anyone something that I wouldn't address myself. Even if I'd address it by saying, 'No comment—you've got nerve!'"

—BROOKE HAUSER

/ theater /



CHARACTER QUEEN

Nurse Jackie's ANNA DEAVERE SMITH tackles health care onstage

> ANNA DEAVERE SMITH created her own theatrical genre by interviewing people, then performing their words verbatim in one-woman shows. This month, she returns to off Broadway with *Let Me Down Easy*, a production that explores the frailty—and resilience—of the human body. Smith conducted about 300 interviews for the performance, in which she channels Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong and the late Texas governor Ann Richards, as well as Hurricane Katrina victims and cancer patients.

The play, which was inspired in part by the 2003 passing of Smith's mother, also delves into the flaws of the health care system. "I was mindful of everything that was happening to my mother," Smith says. "In particular, the way doctors treated her and her family at the end. It wasn't always pretty."—C.C.