

“Goings on About Town,” *The New Yorker*, May 12, 2008

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**YINKA SHONIBARE**

Is it possible to be a conservative artist with a radical agenda? Shonibare provides a test case, with his mannequins clothed in Victorian-style garments sewn from “African” patterned fabric that was, ironically, originally imported to Africa by the Dutch. Shonibare has been coasting on this motif for a decade, and it is starting to feel a little stale, even when deployed in new contexts (for the artist), like a series of photographs that re-create Goya’s famous “Sleep of Reason” etching with men of different ethnicities. But the references to colonialism and physical disability are drawn from the artist’s personal experience—he was born in Britain, raised in Nigeria, and suffered a debilitating virus as a teen-ager—and remain provocative subjects. Through May 17. (Cohan, 533 W. 26th St. 212-714-9500.)