

‘Art Star’ Vanessa Beecroft

Vanessa Beecroft, the artist who usually uses groups of nude models in her installations, is taking some heat¹ over her latest works using unclothed Africans. At the Venice Biennale last year, she hired a group of African immigrants to lie down naked while she splattered them with red paint as some sort of statement on the situation in Darfur. Now, the latest issue of *Elle* magazine shows a photo of Beecroft dressed as the Virgin Mary and holding twin Sudanese babies suckling her breasts. ‘Many people are enraged,’ Amnau Eele, head of the Black Artists Association, told *Page Six*. ‘She wants to be famous on the backs of poor black children.’ Eele isn’t mollified² by the fact that Beecroft, a mother of two, actually breast-fed the twins for two weeks during her visit to a Sudanese orphanage and tried to adopt them over the objections of her own husband, Warner Bros. exec Gary Durkin. The adoption didn’t go through after the twins’ father turned up.

Richard Johnson, *The New York Post*, May 23, 2008

1. **taking some heat:** attracting criticism.
2. **mollified:** less angry.

► Understanding the text

1 Answer these questions.

1. What does Beecroft usually use for her installations?
2. Why is Amnau Eele ‘enraged’?
3. What did Beecroft do to/ for the twins whilst in Sudan?
4. What did she want to do with the twins?
5. What happened?

► Beyond the text

- 2 What type of newspaper is *The New York Post*? Use the Internet to help you.
- 3 The adoption of children from other parts of the world has become a popular thing to do amongst celebrities. Use the Internet to find some examples. Do you think it is a good thing?