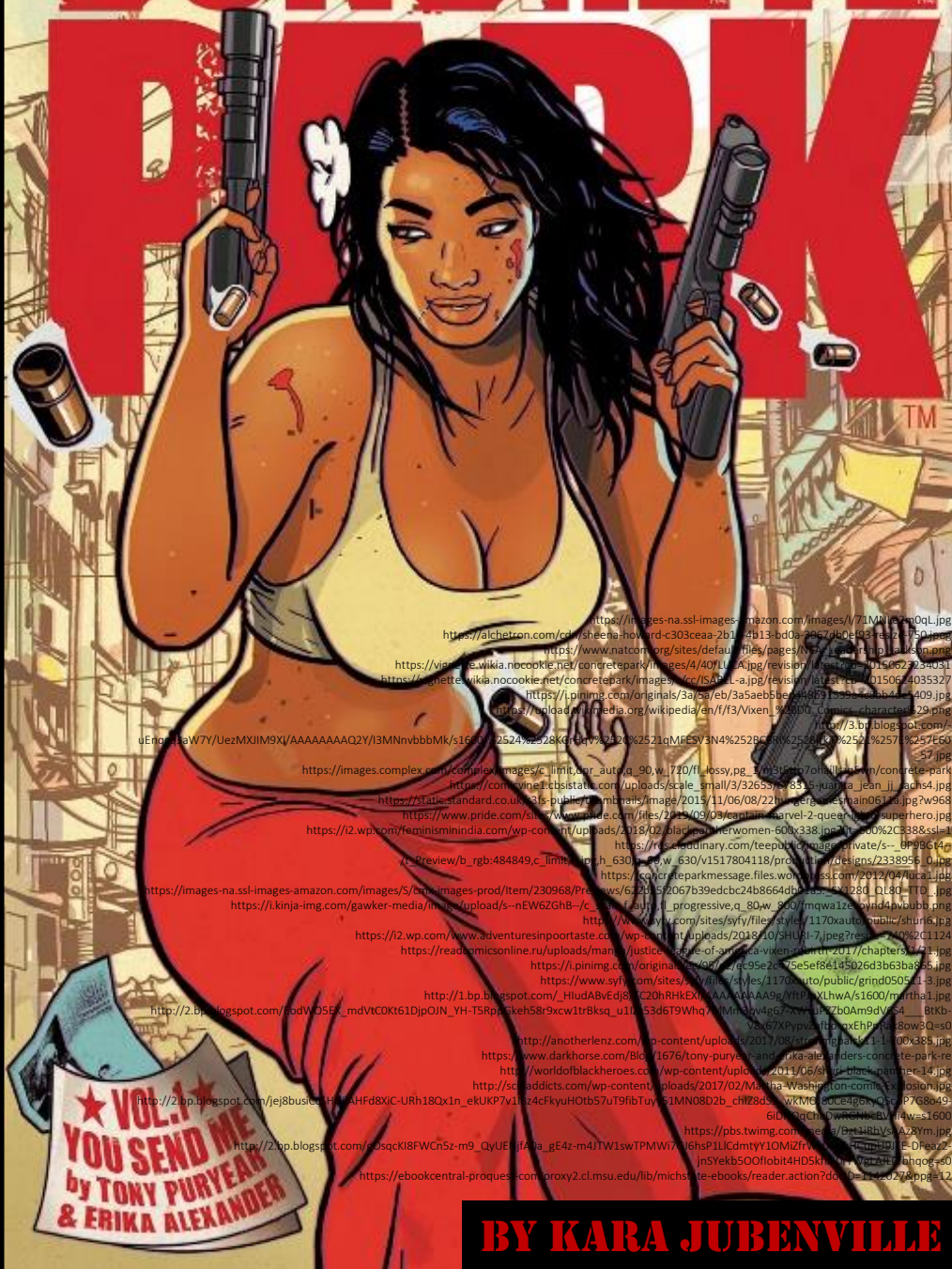


CONCRETE PARK



BY KARA JUBENVILLE

Blackthrough

Independent, Intelligent, Strong



Inside See:
Black Comics: Politics of Race and Representation

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CLOSING NOTE

Although for decades African American women in comics have been hypersexualized, made to **seem weak and unintelligent with a heavy reliance on a man or white people** that all can change.

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All five of these characters **challenge** “the one-dimensional **racist and sexist logic**” that is most found in comics among African American women.

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IN THEIR BOOK, *BLACK COMICS: POLITICS OF RACE AND REPRESENTATION*

“Even within a genre that is typically derided as juvenile, and which traffics predominately in stereotypical characterizations and extreme portrayals of gender and sexuality, there can be progressive representations of Black women.”

“Black bodies were seen as available commodities to be bought and sold in systems of slavery and where, especially Black female bodies, could be presented for sexual entertainment or displayed as sexual curiosities.”



Sheena C.
Howard



Ronald L. Jackson

THEREFORE, WOMEN CAN BREAKTHROUGH THESE STEREOTYPES SET UP FOR THEM DECADES AGO. WOMEN IN COMICS CAN AND ARE REPRESENTED AS **INDEPENDENT, INTELLIGENT, AND STRONG.**

TPOLOGY

“Rarely are Black women portrayed in any medium as independent, intelligent, and strong both physically and spiritually.”

Until Now. These African American women break through old stereotypes and represent a new type that is **strong**, **independent**, and **intelligent**.

“Heroic images of Black women **challenge** the dominant model of superheroes and represent some very **real** and very **powerful** changes.”

These women are “instances of Black heroines taking center stage without resorting to any **excessive fetishization** of their bodies”

They represent “heroes, first and foremost. They save their families, their villages, and their fictional African nations. They also save themselves from numerous physical and emotional dangers, and **model new possibilities** for the representation of Black women in popular culture.”

“So far, it seems to be a great series if you're looking for more **diversity** in your reading, as the range of characters spans from LGBT to those from **many different countries** (considering the country they were originally from on Earth). There are people of **many different skin colors** and a **larger cast of women** than usually seen in comics. There's even a **gang that is all females** who are one of the major gangs in the series.” –
Swimming Through Literature

“I love the **abundance of people of color** with different experiences and **non-monolithic backgrounds**”
- Reaisan

“There is quite a bit of **diversity** in the characters. The **main character** is **female**, there are people from different ethnic backgrounds, and some characters that might be aliens. I'm not positive on that last one because the book doesn't go into a lot of detail on these characters.”
- Phillip Schultz

READER REACTIONS

**“The visuals on Concrete Park are a highly graphic style that is incredibly appealing.”—
Comic Book Resources**

“Puryear’s thick, heavy inks are striking, forming his characters with a great deal of confidence and force. Through his art, you instantly get a feel for this near-future [city]; the swagger of his characters and their surroundings just bursts off of the page.”—Read About Comics

“Super creative, interesting take on the future.” - M. Dewaters

**“Every time I think I know what is going on in Concrete Park, Puryear throws me for a loop. I have to read more.”—
Comics Bulletin**

“The artwork has a unique style and the female protagonist is more realistic. She has scars, a real woman’s body and attitude.” - Avon



OLD

Hypersexualized, Unintelligent because she was caught, and only strong in comparison to white women.

NEW



Powerful in comparison to all, independent, sexy, but her body is normalized, hero. Intelligent, she can think on her feet

HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO U.S. CULTURE?

Luca, Shuri, Vixen, Martha Washington, and Isabel's characters were all created within the last 40 years.

Within that time, (1980-Present) African Americans were experiencing more representation within all career fields, such as surgeons and police officers.

Women were officially given the right to vote in 1984 when Mississippi was the last state to ratify.

Recently, a new trend of female empowerment has taken over in the US. This can be seen through the many films featuring a **strong, intelligent, independent woman.**



SUMMARY OF CHARACTERS

STRONG

All these characters are strong. Each fights men and women who appear stronger than them but, in the end,, they always come out on top.

INDEPENDENT

Each of these women rely on themselves and only themselves to get things done.

They fight by themselves, stand up for themselves, and think for themselves.

INTELLIGENT

These characters show intelligence in many ways. For some, it is being resourceful, for others it is planning, and, in other cases, they think clearly through situations.



Luca is breaking through the common gender stereotypes. She is **strong** and **brave**. She is **protecting her friend** against people who forced him to fight and she is doing it all on her own. She found something she could use to protect herself. She's **resourceful**.



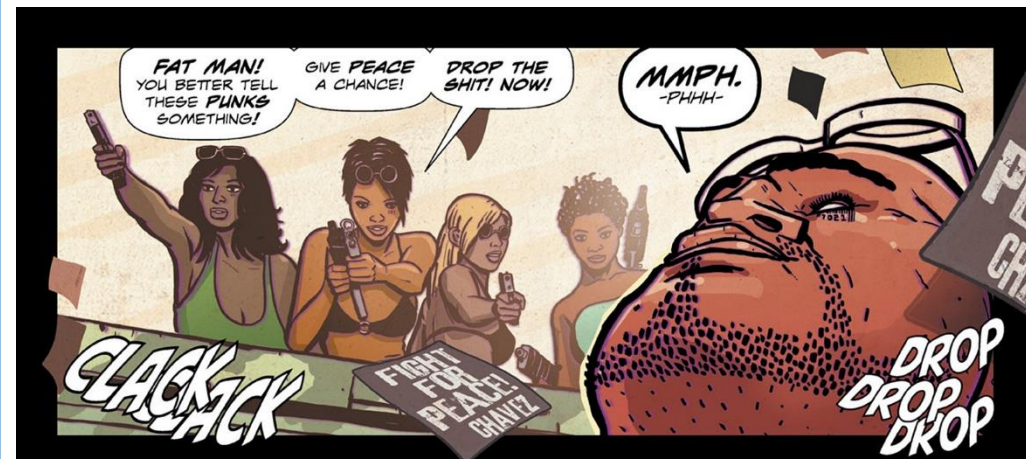
“Black superheroines run the risk of simply reinforcing racial and gender stereotypes, they also have the potential to embody progressive and empowering concepts about Black female strength and heroics. After all, the entire narrative purpose of any superhero is to **right wrongs**, **defend** the weak, and to be a **champion for justice**.”

ISABEL

Year: 2013
Comic Book:
Concrete Park



In the frame below, Isabel is showing her **strength**. She will do what she must to get what she wants, which usually involves keeping her friend's safe. She is **standing up** to this large man **by herself** to ensure Luca's safety.

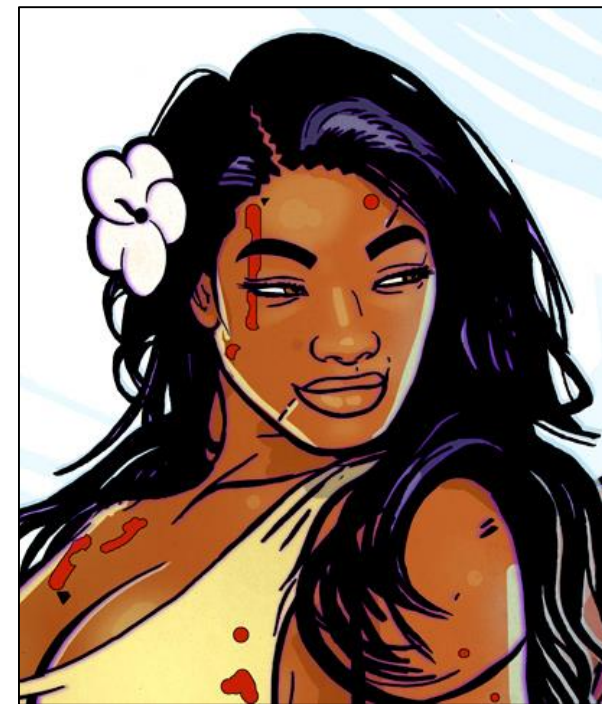




This single panel shows how **caring** and **intelligent** Isabel is. She wants her friend to stay safe and to do so, they must **think through the plan**. Since Luca is on the most-wanted list, Isabel dresses her up in a disguise so she will be safe at the event. Also, Isabel's **independence** is shown. Although she is in a group, she thinks independently and produces **her own thoughts** and plans, such as putting a disguise on Luca.

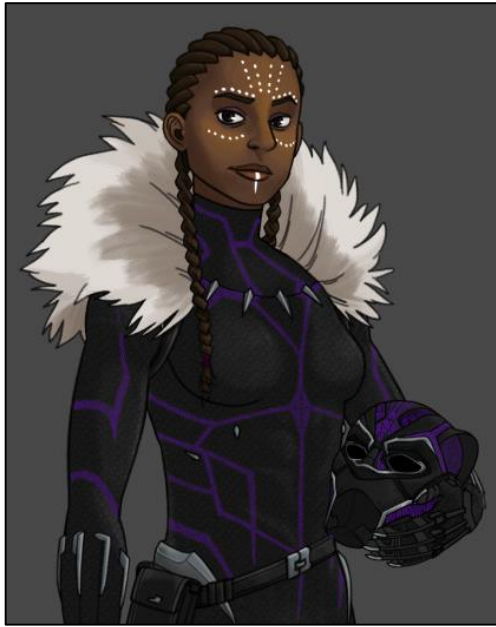
LUCA

Year: 2013
Comic Book:
Concrete Park



Unlike most African American women presented in comics, Luca **does not sell her body** or act in a hypersexual way.





SHURI

Year: 2009

**Comic Book:
Black Panther**



This panel below shows not only how **strong** Shuri is, but also how caring she is of her people. She was **willing to die** to protect Wakanda and she did.

Here, Martha is shown when she is younger. She had just escaped the mental hospital. When a man in a white suit tried to take her back, she **knew better** than to go with him. She was **resourceful** when she used a glass bottle she found to kill him and **intelligent** in taking his credit cards to get money. She is very **independent** as she is shown alone throughout most of the comic and yet still manages to stay alive.





MARTHA

Year: 1990

Comic Book:

Give me Liberty

Martha is also shown as **intelligent**. The reason she survived below is because she knew to put on her facemask and protect herself.

Martha Washington is a trained military fighter. She is **strong** both physically and emotionally. In this panel to the right, she is **left alone** after all her fellow soldiers have died. She is strong to continue to fight after this unimaginable loss

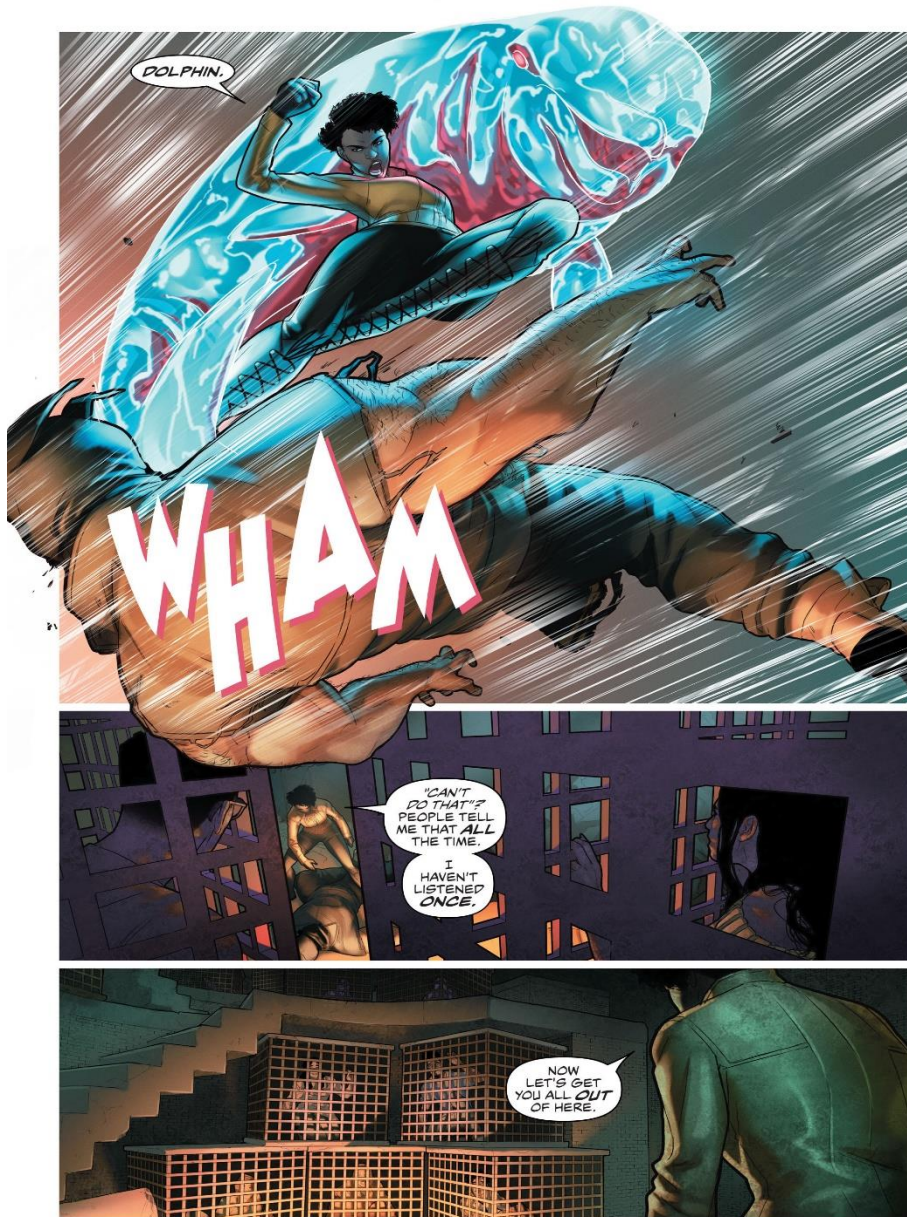


“*The Deadliest of the Species* is a typical superheroic story about bravery and self-sacrifice that both utilizes and **challenges** centuries old stereotypes about Africa and Black Women.”



Shuri shows her strength against both men and women in battle, always **overpowering** them. When assuming she is weaker or the same as a male superhero, Shuri shows **her incredible power** by killing this man. As can be seen in the image, she takes this man on **all by herself**. Below shows how **intelligent** Shuri is. She is constantly creating new, helpful inventions.



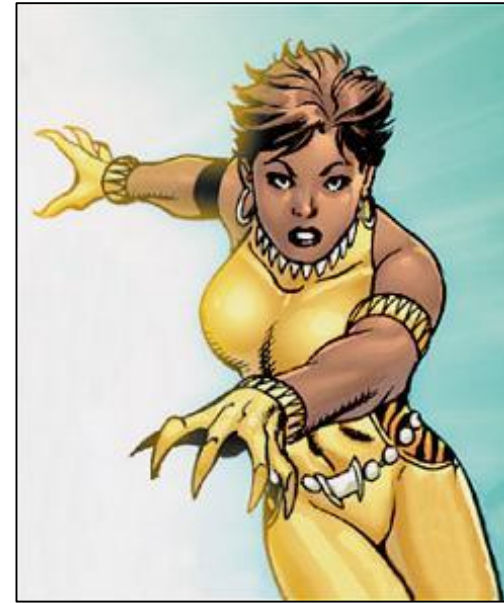


Vixen takes on enemies **by herself** to **save people**. She is **strong** as can be seen when she takes out this large man.

VIXEN

Year: 1981

Comic Book: Vixen



Vixen is showing her **intelligence** in this panel when she examines the place to see if it is empty using both her eyesight and a Doberman's sense of smell.