A world of womer

The International Museum of Women will open maiden exhibition Monday, featuring more than 3 photographs taken by Mill Valley photographer Paola 6 anturco. The installation, "Celebrating Women All Othe World," is the culmination of Gianturco's travels more than 17 celebrations in 15 countries, where she do umented events ranging from parades to ceremonies all held in honor of women.

There are haunting images of coffins being carri through Spanish streets by those who have had ne death experiences; humorous pictures of husbands ru ning an obstacle race with their wives slung over the backs in Finland; and powerful prints of bare-breast virgins in Swaziland dancing for the queen mother.

But it's the pictures taken in America that astoni most people, Gianturco said. The images, taken duri the 2002 Miss America pageant, reflect her view that t controversial contest is culturally valid because it privides scholarships for women who enter and win. Gia turco, a businesswoman for 34 years before switching photography nine years ago, got the idea to focus on male-oriented festivals during her extensive travels

"Just the fact that there were so many of these festivals was provocative to me."

Photographer
PAOLA GIANTURCO

2000 while working on book about craftswome "Just the fact that the were so many of these fes vals was provocative to me Gianturco said, adding the it was the perfect venue achieve her dream of "heling people everywhere understand each other mo completely."

So she traveled with he Canon EOS camera, a flas and two lenses, taking I rolls of film to each even resulting in more tha 10,000 images. She also received a grant from the more

seum to purchase costumes, masks and artifacts that wi also be integrated into the show. Gianturco said she be came so dedicated to getting the museum opened whi working on the show and the 240-page book published to Powerhouse Books that accompanies it that she plans to donate all the royalties and rights to the exhibition to the museum.

Show curator Anna Balsamo said she is as proud of the educational aspects as she is of the visual ones. "There something called 'What Color Are You?,' which is a prosentation that shows there are over 100 words Braziliar use when asked about the color of their skin," she said "What we're trying to do in a poetic way is call attentio to the fact that our concept of race — with simplistic cold words — doesn't even begin to get at the ways that peopl around the world describe themselves."

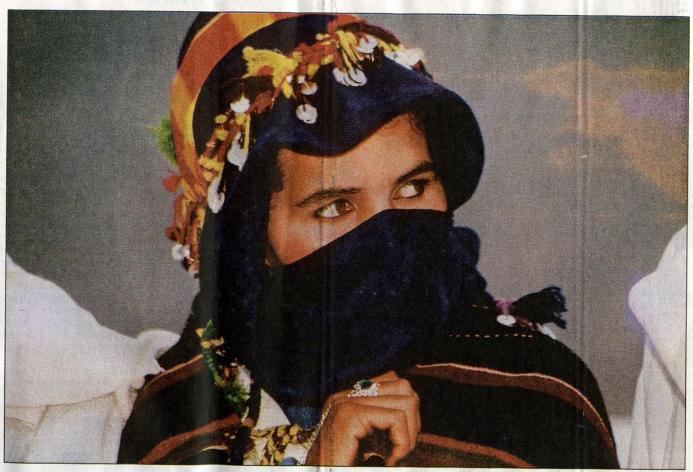
working on the show and the 240-page book published be Powerhouse Books that accompanies it that she plans to donate all the royalties and rights to the exhibition to the museum.

Show curator Anna Balsamo said she is as proud of the educational aspects as she is of the visual ones. "There's something called 'What Color Are You?,' which is a pre sentation that shows there are over 100 words Brazilians use when asked about the color of their skin," she said "What we're trying to do in a poetic way is call attention to the fact that our concept of race — with simplistic color words — doesn't even begin to get at the ways that people around the world describe themselves."

The exhibition was chosen to be the first show because it perfectly reflects the mission and even the location of the museum, said Elizabeth Colton, chairwoman of the museum's board of directors. As the first global institution of its kind, it belongs in San Francisco because "it's right on the edge where East meets West, and we think that's very important." Supporters have already raised \$8 million toward the \$120 million needed in cash and operating funds, and she is confident that the museum will open in 2008 — on International Women's Day, March 8.

The show runs through Dec. 17. Because the museum will not open its permanent home at Pier 26 until 2008, the exhibition is in the Concourse Lobby of One Market in Spear Tower. Information about lectures and performances associated with the exhibition can be found at www.imow.org or by calling (415) 543-4669.

- Anastasia Hendrix



Photos by PAOLA GIANTURCO

Wearing a veil is customary for Ait Haddou women in Morocco during wedding ceremonies, though they do not wear them daily.

