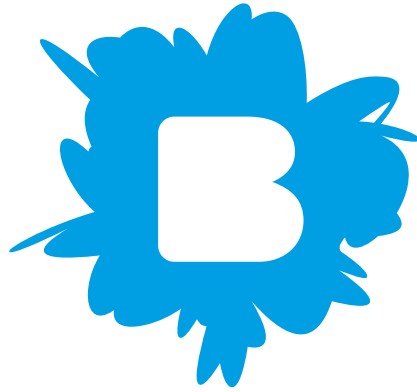


# Press Release



August 2012

## **New Works by Artist Mickalene Thomas Influenced by Interest in Design To Appear in Brooklyn Museum Exhibition on View September 28, 2012–January 20, 2013**

Several new works by multimedia artist Mickalene Thomas influenced by her long-standing interest in interior design, including four installations evoking the sets she creates in her studio for photographing models, will be featured in the Brooklyn presentation of her first solo museum exhibition. On view September 28, 2012, through January 20, 2013, *Mickalene Thomas: Origin of the Universe* will include nearly 100 works, among them paintings and collages of domestic interiors and four room installations, inspired by the artist's childhood memories and her interest in the 1970s.

The rooms created by Thomas will include wood paneling, furnishings, textiles, and works of art and are similar to the backdrops that appear in her paintings of African American women, for which she is best known. The artist's paintings and collages, most of mid-twentieth-century uninhabited modernist interiors, as well as the installations, were also influenced by her investigation of vintage books on modern decor, such as the 1970 eighteen-volume set *The Practical Encyclopedia of Good Decorating and Home Improvement*.

Thomas's oeuvre investigates the body in relationship to interior spaces and the landscape through a pictorial style that transforms past masterworks by reimagining them in a modern-day idiom. Her interiors draw on a range of historical periods, from the nineteenth century to the present.

Among the paintings and collages of interiors included in the exhibition are works inspired by Thomas's 2011 residence at Claude Monet's home in Giverny, France, such as *La Maison de Monet* and *Interior: Fireplace with Monet Tiles*, as well as the rhinestone-studded *Interior: Striped Foyer*, *Interior: Blue Couch with Green Owl*, and *Interior: Green and White Couch*.

Thomas's work grows from a long study of art history, drawing inspiration from the traditional genres of portraiture, landscape, and still life, as well as from popular culture, whose imagery she uses to explore issues of identity and race, as well as beauty and self. Her work, which synthesizes a wide range of artistic and cultural references, presents a complex perspective on what it means to be a woman and expands common definitions of beauty.

## **Brooklyn Museum**

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Her signature portraits of vibrant black women in photographs, paintings, and collages explore artifice, masking, and costuming. Working with models drawn from her circle of friends and relatives, she outfits them with carefully selected costumes, wigs, and makeup, and then poses them in carefully composed “rooms” carved out of her studio space.

Born in 1971, Mickalene Thomas received a B.F.A. from Pratt Institute and an M.F.A. from Yale University. She has participated in residency programs at the Versailles Foundation, Munn Artists Program, and the Studio Museum in Harlem. Her work has been shown in group exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit; The Renaissance Society, Chicago; and MoMA PS1, New York. Among the many public institutions whose collections include her work are the Brooklyn Museum; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

*Mickalene Thomas: Origin of the Universe* was organized by the Santa Monica Museum of Art and Lisa Melandri, former Deputy Director for Exhibitions and Programs. The significantly expanded Brooklyn presentation is organized by Eugenie Tsai, John and Barbara Vogelstein Curator of Contemporary Art, Brooklyn Museum.

Generous support for this exhibition was provided by Forest City Ratner Companies, Giulia Borghese and the Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia Contemporary Art Exhibition Fund.

The exhibition is accompanied by a full-color, illustrated catalogue.

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### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **Admission:**

Contribution \$12; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$8. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

#### **Museum Hours:**

Wednesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; first Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

#### **Directions:**

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.