

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE BASS PRESENTS AN EXHIBITION & IMMERSIVE ART EXPERIENCE BY MICKALENE THOMAS TO OPEN DURING MIAMI ART WEEK

Mickalene Thomas: *Better Nights* on view December 1, 2019 – September 27, 2020



MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (NOV 19, 2019) – The Bass, Miami Beach’s contemporary art museum, will open Mickalene Thomas: *Better Nights*, an installation that transforms the galleries into an immersive art experience for the duration of the exhibition, starting on Sunday, December 1.

The exhibition is inspired by the parties the artist’s mother hosted with friends and family during the 1970s and 80s to fundraise for their theater productions, including 'Put a Little Sugar in my Bowl,' as well as to raise money for her treatment of sickle cell anemia. First introduced with *Better Days* in 2013, this new iteration unfolds into the second chapter of Thomas’ transformations of social “experiment” pleasures by re-imagining a black radical aesthetic. The installation embodies a feeling of home, yet also a speakeasy, conceptually reconstructed according to the domestic aesthetic of the period, including faux wood paneling, wallpaper and custom designed and reupholstered furniture with the artist’s signature textiles and mirrors. An extension of Thomas’ artistic universe, the installation plays with artifice, developed through intersections between real and faux elements. This exhibition incorporates both work by the artist and a selection of work by emerging and prominent black artists curated by Thomas.

Exhibiting artists include: painting and photography by Nina Chanel Abney, Derrick Adams, David Antonio Cruz, Lyle Ashton Harris, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Xaviera Simmons, John Edmonds, Alexandria Smith, Adrienne Raquel, Arielle Bobb-Willis, Micaiah Carter; and video work by Christie Neptune, Devin N. Morris, Brontez Purnell; and a video work by Ja’Tovia Gary selected by Jasmine Wahi from Project for Empty Space. With the prop-like tableau echoing the collage-like compositional style of Thomas’ paintings and essential to this project, Thomas has created a program of live performances and appearances featuring Jody Watley, Meshell Ndegeocello, QUIÑ, Georgia Anne Muldrow, Mashonda Tifrere, Devin Tracy, CHIKA, among others, as well as live DJ sets by Derrick Adams, YSL, Mel, Val, Dimples, Wavy Fox, and Papi Juice, among others.

The first chapter, *Better Days*, took place at the Galerie Volkhaus in Basel, Switzerland during Art Basel 2013. Timed to open during Art Basel Miami Beach 2019, the exhibition will be on view through September 27, 2020.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mickalene Thomas (b. 1971, Camden, New Jersey) is a 2015 United States Artists Francie Bishop Good & David Horvitz Fellow, distinguished visual artist, filmmaker and curator who has exhibited extensively both nationally and internationally. She is known for the impressive range and complexity, encompassing painting, photography, video, film, performance and installation art that combine art-historical, political and pop-cultural references. Her depictions of black femininity re-imagines notions of beauty, desire, power, equity and resilience across mediums by taking archival material from her personal experiences, TV shows, adverts and music, and disrupting the narratives within various modes of building community and collective experiences. Thomas holds an MFA from Yale University and a BFA from Pratt Institute. She's held solo museum exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum, Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, and L'Ecole des Beaux Arts, Monaco. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Mickalene Thomas: A Moment's Pleasure* at the Baltimore Museum of Art (2019); *Mickalene Thomas: Femmes Noires* at the Art Gallery of Ontario (2018) and Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans (2019); *Mickalene Thomas: I Can't See You Without Me* at the Wexner Center for the Arts (Columbus, Ohio, 2018); *Mickalene Thomas: Do I Look Like a Lady?* at MOCA Grand (Los Angeles, 2016-17); *Mickalene Thomas: Mentors, Muses and Celebrities* at Aspen Art Museum (2016), Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis (2017) and Spelman College Museum of Fine Art (Atlanta, 2017); and *Muse: Mickalene Thomas Photographs* at Aperture Foundation, New York (2016), which is scheduled to travel to several venues across the United States through 2019 and features her notably curated exhibition tête-à-tête. Other recent shows include group exhibitions *Figuring History* at Seattle Art Museum (2018) and *You Are Here* at North Carolina Museum of Art (2018). Thomas's work is in the permanent collections of New York's Museum of Modern Art, Brooklyn Museum, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, Hammer Museum, and Smithsonian American Art Museum, among many others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mickalene Thomas: *Better Nights* is organized by the artist and co-curated by Silvia Karman Cubiñá.

This exhibition is part of the Knight Art Commissions Program funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Generous support for this exhibition is provided by Dior. Additional contribution provided by PHILLIPS and Kavi Gupta, *Deux Femmes Noires* and supported in part by Swarovski.

The Bass is funded by the City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program and Cultural Arts Council, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, and sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and The Bass membership.

ABOUT THE BASS

The Bass is Miami Beach's contemporary art museum. Founded in 1964 by the City of Miami Beach, the museum was established after the donation of a private collection by residents John and Johanna Bass and opened in what was formerly the Miami Beach Public Library and Art Center, a 1930s Art Deco building designed by Russell Pancoast. Recognized for organizing the first solo museum exhibitions in the United States of international artists such as Erwin Wurm, The Bass has also presented major exhibitions by influential artists including El Anatsui, Isaac Julien, Eve Sussman and Piotr Ukiński. The exhibition program encompasses a wide range of media and artistic points of view, bringing fresh perspectives to the diverse cultural context of Miami Beach. The Bass is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. For more information, please visit www.thebass.org, or follow The Bass on social media at www.facebook.com/TheBassMoA or Twitter and Instagram via @TheBassMoA.

CURRENT & UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS AT THE BASS

HAEGUE YANG: *In the Cone of Uncertainty*
November 2, 2019 – April 5, 2020

LARA FAVARETTO: *Blind Spot*
December 1, 2019 – April 19, 2020

MEDIA CONTACTS

For U.S. and international inquiries:
Elizabeth Stewart

For local and Florida media inquiries:
Julia Rudo

SUTTON
elizabeth@suttoncomms.com
+1 212 202 3402

Communications Manager, The Bass
jrudo@thebass.org
+ 1 786 477 6009

For a complete selection of high-res imagery and to access the full press kit, please visit
www.thebass.org/presskit.

[Images: Family photos of Sandra Bush. © Mickalene Thomas. Courtesy of the artist.]