Mickalene Thomas--Mama Bush: One of a Kind Two

Dates: February 17 (Thurs.) – June 12 (Sun.), 2011  Place: Gallery I, Hara Museum (Tokyo)

Also on view: Be Alive! —Selections from the Hara Museum Collection

The Hara Museum of Contemporary Art is pleased to announce a special project entitled *Mickalene Thomas--Mama Bush: One of a Kind Two*, to be carried out by the artist Mickalene Thomas in Gallery I of the museum.

Based in New York, Mickalene Thomas (born in 1971) has become widely known for her portrait paintings done in vivid colors and rhinestones. For 10 months, from March 2010, work that she did for The Museum of Modern Art, New York was installed in a show window on 53rd Street, propelling her into the limelight. Thomas received a B.F.A. from the Pratt Institute in 2000 and an M.F.A. from the Yale University School of Art in 2002. Her present work consists of photographs, collages, videos and large-scale paintings. African-American women appear as models in her works, which are strongly informed by the artist’s own identity as an African-American. In these works, boldly rendered women strike poses that are at once dignified and provocative, and are highly suggestive of the Blaxploitation imagery that was popular in America in the 1970s.

This project was first conceived of after the museum acquired the painting *Mama Bush: One of a Kind Two*, which features the artist’s mother as the model. During the project, a part of the stage setting in her New York studio will be reproduced as an installation, allowing viewers to understand the artist’s approach to her subject matter and her creative process. The large-format painting, whose composition is reminiscent of the famous painting by Ingres, *Odalisque*, shows a nude woman, who is Sandra, the artist’s own mother and “No. 1 muse.” By painting her mother, the artist believed she might close the gap that had grown between mother and daughter. Thus was born this and other paintings with her mother as the model. The group of paintings selected for this project, including work paired with DVD imagery, may be considered a starting point for an artist whose work addresses such varied issues as race and gender.

The artist is scheduled to come to Japan for this project and will give lectures in association with Black History Month (note), an event organized by the U.S. Embassy, Tokyo. At the Hara Museum (Tokyo), she is scheduled to give a talk on Thursday, February 17. The artist’s work will also be featured at the highly renowned contemporary art fair G Tokyo 2011 which will be held from Saturday, February 19.
Note: Black History Month is a remembrance of important people and events in the history of the African diaspora. Since 1976, it is celebrated annually in the United States of America and Canada in February and the United Kingdom in the month of October. In the U.S., numerous governmental as well as private institutions take the opportunity to organize seminars and events on ethnic diversity and its promotion through Black History Month.

**Exhibition Data**

**Title:** Mickalene Thomas--Mama Bush: One of a Kind Two  
**Dates:** February 17 (Thurs.) – June 12 (Sun.), 2011  
*Also on view: Be Alive! —Selections from the Hara Museum Collection

**Organized by:** Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Hara Museum Fund  
**Special grant by:** U.S. Embassy, Tokyo  
**Cooperation provided by:** Lehmann Maupin Gallery, Gallery Koyanagi

**Place:** Gallery I, Hara Museum of Contemporary Art  
4-7-25, Kitashinagawa, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 140-0001  
Tel: 03-3445-0651  Fax: 03-3473-0104  E-mail: info@haramuseum.or.jp  
Website: [http://www.haramuseum.or.jp](http://www.haramuseum.or.jp)  
Mobile site: [http://mobile.haramuseum.or.jp](http://mobile.haramuseum.or.jp)  

**Hours:** 11:00 am – 5:00 pm, Wednesdays (except May 4) until 8:00 pm  
*Last entry 30 min. before closing.

**Closed:** Mondays (open on March 21) and March 22

**Admission:** General 1,000 yen. Students 700 yen (high school and university) or 500 yen  
(elementary and junior high). Free for Hara Museum members and students through high school every Saturday during the school term. 100 yen discount per person for groups of 20 or more.

**Directions:** 5 min. by taxi or 15 min. on foot from JR Shinagawa Station (Takanawa exit); or from the same station take the No.96 bus, get off at the first stop (Gotenyama), and walk 3 min./ The BloomBUS! free shuttle bus service is available between Shinagawa Station (Takanawa exit) and the Hara Museum every Sunday until June 12, 2011 (Sponsored by: Bloomberg L.P./ Artist: Yasuhiro Suzuki). Please check the Hara Museum website for further details.

**Related Event:** Artist Talk: Mickalene Thomas  
February 17 (Thurs.), 2011  6:30 – 8:00 pm (door opens at 6:00 pm)  
Organized by: Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, U.S. Embassy, Tokyo  
Place: The Hall at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art  
*Free of charge. The talk will be given in English with Japanese interpretation.

Reservation is required (accepted from Tuesday, February 1).  
Tel: 03-3445-0669  E-mail: info@haramuseum.or.jp  
Guests will be able to enjoy the collection exhibition as well as the Mickalene Thomas project.

**Featured works**

*Mama Bush: One of a Kind Two* (2009), 274.3 x 365.8 x 5.1cm, rhinestones, acrylic and enamel on panel

*Ain’t I a Woman (Sandra)* (2009) [painting (rhinestones, acrylic and enamel on panel/ size: 91.4 x 71.1 cm), monitor (45.7 x 61 x 13.5cm) and DVD]

*Still Life with Flowers on Flower* (2009), 152.4 x 121.9 cm, rhinestones, acrylic and enamel on panel

*In addition to the above-mentioned paintings, a number of photographic images will be included.*

Artist website: http://mickalenetomas.com/
Gallery website: http://www.lehmannmaupin.com/#/artists/mickalene-thomas/

【Exhibitions in 2011】
January 14 (Fri.) – June 12 (Sun.) Be Alive! —Selections from the Hara Museum Collection
June 25 (Sat.) – August 28 (Sun.) Ming Wong (tentative title)
September 10 (Sat.) – November 27 (Sun.) Art Scope 2009-2011 (tentative title)
   Featured artists: Meiro Koizumi, Hiroe Saeki, Eva Berendes, Jan Scharrelmann

*Mickalene Thomas, Ming Wong and artists participating in Art Scope will come to the Hara Museum. Please contact us for details or to arrange an appointment.