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Kyle Hinton | kyle@hellothirdeye.com***Mickalene Thomas: All About Love* to Open at The Broad, Launching an International Touring Exhibition of the Celebrated Artist's Work, Embracing Self-Empowerment and Joy**

Opening May 25, 2024, the Presentation Features Over 80 Works and Immersive Installations



LOS ANGELES, CA – The Broad is pleased to announce the launch of a new touring special exhibition *Mickalene Thomas: All About Love*, running from May 25 to September 29, 2024. Co-organized by the Hayward Gallery, London, and The Broad, Los Angeles, and in partnership with the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, *Mickalene Thomas: All About Love* will be the first major international tour of this pioneering artist's work. Marking its debut at The Broad with over 80 works made by the artist over the last 20 years, the exhibition highlights how Thomas has mastered and innovated within several disciplines, from mixed-media painting and collage to installation and photography. The exhibition shares its title and several of its themes with the pivotal text by feminist author bell hooks, in which love is an active process rooted in healing, carving a path away from domination and towards collective liberation. Tickets to the exhibition will be made available in Spring 2024 at thebroad.org.

"Mickalene Thomas's visionary artistic practice presents an unapologetic focus on Black female representation, amplifying portraiture's capacity to capture authentic lived experience and relationships," said Joanne Heyler, Founding Director of The Broad. "Thomas's work, while pushing conventional boundaries of technique and material, touches all aspects of culture and society, from notions of beauty to sexuality and politics, powerfully bringing visibility to those who have historically been excluded and marginalized in art history."

Born in 1971 in Camden, New Jersey, Thomas completed her MFA from the Yale University School of Art in 2002 and a residency at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2003. Soon after she became well known for her large-scale acrylic paintings of Black women in states of leisure and repose using rhinestones, a central material in her practice that symbolizes the complexities of femininity. Depicting women with confident and assured expressions, the subjects of her works are often seen in domestic interiors from Black America, claiming the agency of womanhood while deconstructing the art historical canon. Similarly, Thomas's photographs, collages, and figurative paintings often re-stage scenes from 19th century French painters such as Henri Matisse and Édouard Manet, pushing back against the subjugation and oppressive narratives upheld by Western archives, cultural institutions, and representation systems.

"In Mickalene Thomas's hands, collage becomes a way of thinking about love in a serious way," said Ed Schad, Curator at The Broad. "As Thomas keeps the essence of individuals alive in her work – as the individuals are re-imagined and remade, configured from different moods and different circumstances over many years of trust and commitment – it is a love ethic she is after."

The Broad's debut of *Mickalene Thomas: All About Love* will reflect some of the artist's earliest inquiries into visual culture, sexuality, memory, and erotica and move into the present. On view will be the early photographic triptych, *Lounging, Standing, Looking* (2003), a piece which depicts the artist's own mother, exploring kinship and care. These modes of intimate relations come to inform work such as *Portrait of Maya No. 10* (2017) from the Broad collection. This acrylic and rhinestone work embodies Thomas's signature ability to apply several layers of material and symbolic meaning into a single surface. At eight feet tall, the subject is empowered, sparkled, and poised, commanding her outward gaze.

The exhibition is largely populated by works at this immersive and ambitious scale, such as the twelve-foot wide *I'm Feelin Good* (2014) which also uses rhinestone elements. Unifying these larger-than-life subjects together in the museum's galleries will envelop

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viewers into the bold and dynamic universe the artist has created, where steadfast love overcomes political strife. In addition to towering wall works, video collages such as *Angelitos Negros* (2016) will also be presented. This work immortalizes the late singer and actress Eartha Kitt, who sings about the absence of Black angels in art history, reflecting a core theme within the exhibition. Through her queries into pop culture and mass media, Thomas offers a reverberating demand for Black women to be seen and understood, and for viewers to become what hooks calls “practitioners of love.”

A publication will accompany the exhibition, including Thomas in conversation with Hayward Gallery Chief Curator, Rachel Thomas, and essays by Claudia Rankine, Darnell L. Moore, Ed Schad, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Renée Mussai, and Christine Y. Kim that cover Thomas’s distinct visual vocabulary, drawing on themes of love, intergenerational female empowerment, and tenets of Black feminist theory.

Tickets to *Mickalene Thomas: All About Love* will become available in Spring 2024 at thebroad.org. The themes of the exhibition will extend into a full slate of associated programming developed in collaboration with the artist, including a summer concert series and in-gallery programs centering women and Black and queer communities. Additional details will be announced in the coming months.

Image credit: Mickalene Thomas, *Din avec la main dans le miroir et jupe rouge*, 2023. Rhinestones, acrylic and glitter on canvas mounted on wood panel. 90 x 110 in (228.6 x 279.4 cm). © Mickalene Thomas.

About The Broad

The Broad is a contemporary art museum founded in 2015 by philanthropists Eli and Edythe Broad on Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles. The museum offers free general admission and presents an active program of rotating temporary exhibitions and innovative audience engagement, all within a landmark building designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro in collaboration with Gensler. The Broad is home to the Broad collection, which is one of the world’s leading collections of postwar and contemporary art. The 120,000-square-foot building features two floors of gallery space and is the headquarters of The Broad Art Foundation’s worldwide lending library, which has been loaning collection works to museums around the world since 1984.

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