

Artist Mickalene Thomas to Speak at North Carolina Museum of Art
Free lecture is part of Museum's Docent Lecture Endowment Series

Raleigh, N.C.—On Sunday, April 6, New York-based artist Mickalene Thomas visits the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) to give a free lecture to the public. Thomas will be joined by Museum Director Lawrence J. Wheeler and Linda Dougherty, NCMA chief curator and curator of contemporary art, for a lively discussion about her work. Afterward Thomas will answer questions from the audience.



Thomas earned her Bachelor in Fine Arts degree in painting at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, in 2000 and a Master in Fine Arts degree from the Yale University School of Art in 2002. Her work was featured in the NCMA's *30 Americans* exhibition in 2011 and has been included in group exhibitions in museums across the country. Her painting *Three Graces: Les Trois Femmes Noires* (pictured below, right) is part of the Museum's permanent collection.

"Mickalene Thomas is an incredibly important voice in the art world, and we are proud to show her work at the NCMA," says Wheeler. "*Three Graces*, with its bright colors and dazzling rhinestones, is a visitor favorite and starts some of the most thought-provoking conversations in our galleries. We're excited to continue that conversation during this lecture."

Thomas is known for her elaborate, tactile paintings adorned with a variety of media. She frequently makes reference to art historical traditions in her work, recasting characters as contemporary African American women—as in *Three Graces*.

"Mickalene Thomas's glamorized representations of African American women highlight stereotypes and ideals of celebrity and identity while simultaneously romanticizing ideas of femininity and power," Dougherty explains. "Her work is meaningful, beautiful, and complex and is a significant addition to the Museum's contemporary art collection."

This lecture is made possible by the Museum's Docent Lecture Endowment. To commemorate the opening of the Museum's East Building in 1983, docents created the endowment to fund a series of free lectures for the public. The Docent Lecture Endowment has grown primarily from gifts made by the docents themselves. Mickalene Thomas is the 21st guest speaker in this series.



Docent Endowment Lecture: Mickalene Thomas

Sunday, April 6, 2 pm
East Building, Museum Auditorium
Free; ticket from Box Office required

Photo captions, from top:

Courtesy Mickalene Thomas and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong

Mickalene Thomas, *Three Graces: Les Trois Femmes Noires*, 2011, rhinestones, acrylic paint, and oil enamel on wood panel, 108 x 144 in., Purchased with funds from the North Carolina State Art Society (Robert F. Phifer Bequest)

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About the North Carolina Museum of Art

The North Carolina Museum of Art's permanent collection spans more than 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum opened West Building, home to the permanent collection, in 2010. The North Carolina Museum of Art, Lawrence J. Wheeler, director, is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, Pat McCrory, governor, and an agency of the Department of Cultural Resources, Susan Kluttz, secretary.