

## Mickalene Thomas, “Tête de Femme”

★★★★

**Lehmann Maupin**, through Aug 8  
(see Chelsea)

Making a radical shift away from the landscape and interior scenes that dominated her 2012 solo show at this gallery, Thomas



Untitled #2

concentrates on women's heads in her new mixed-media portraits. Based on playful collages that the artist made of her friends, the larger-than-life images capture faces through a Cubistic lens while also referencing such Pop Art legends as Warhol and Wesselmann. Rendered on wood panels with a combination of enamel, acrylic, oils, glitter, graphite and rhinestones, Thomas kicks her process up a notch by adding silkscreened elements to the mix.

*Untitled #10* depicts a woman with one eye closed and the other substituted by a screen-printed flower from a Warhol painting. Her angular nose is formed from hundreds of rhinestones, and her lips have been smeared on with red oil stick. A vibrant palette of pink, green, yellow and blue shapes define the head's form, which besides Cubism also alludes to Matisse, particularly his late cut-paper works.

*Carla*, the only titled work here, portrays Lehmann Maupin partner



Untitled #1

Carla Camacho floating on a field of hard-edge, colorful shapes and gestural flourishes, while *Untitled #8*, the only diptych in the show, has almost a Basquiat feel to it. Multilayered with all of the artist's new techniques in play, it epitomizes what Thomas so eloquently adds to the genre of portraiture.—Paul Laster

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