

# Weekend Arts II

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## Art in Review

### Mickalene Thomas

'Tête de Femme'

Lehmann Maupin  
540 West 26th Street, Chelsea  
Through Aug. 8

With their asymmetrical eyes, sequin-adorned cheekbones and swipes of bright lipstick, the subjects of Mickalene Thomas's new collage-paintings could be Picasso's "Demoiselles" glammed up for a night at Studio 54.

Although these works make use of screen printing and seem destined to reproduce ad infinitum online (one smaller, square-shaped piece practically screams, "Instagram me!"), the artist has said that they are based on collages of Color-aid paper and other materials.

Armed with that knowledge, you might see this body of work as a back-to-basics moment for Ms. Thomas — one that follows a momentous two years of museum shows and experiments with feature-length film and installation. The emotional heaviness of those recent projects, tributes to the artist's mother (who died this past year after a long illness), seems to have lifted; playful Cubist compositions,



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"Carla," from 2014, by Mickalene Thomas.

by way of the shrieking palettes of late Warhol, signal a preoccupation with surfaces and formal problems.

But Ms. Thomas has rarely met a formal problem she couldn't solve, and so these works feel a little too effortless. Her glamazons address fierceness and femininity in generic terms; you hope that she will return, at some point, to the individuality and emotional intelligence of portraiture.

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