

WIDE RAINBOW LESSONS: Artist Mickalene Thomas

ARTIST INTRO:

Mickalene Thomas (b. 1971) is a contemporary African-American artist based in Brooklyn, NY. Thomas received her BFA from Pratt Institute and her MFA from Yale School of Art. She is best known for her layered portraits, collages, and elaborate paintings made of rhinestones, acrylic, and enamel. Thomas' work draws from art history and popular culture exploring themes of femininity, beauty, power, race, and gender. She is a queer woman of color representing women of color by celebrating family, friends, celebrities, and other iconic historical figures in her portraits. Thomas has been widely exhibited and her artwork is included in many major museum collections. She continues to make powerful portraits today and co-founded *The Josie Club* which is a support network for queer female artists of color to help support, fundraise and sponsor their work.

ARTWORK:



WORKSHOP:

Let's create collages that draw attention to the beautiful, diverse, and important women in our lives inspired by portrait artist Mickalene Thomas!

1. Think of an extraordinary woman in your life that you'd like to honor, celebrate, and show the world!
2. Invite that woman to sit for your portrait or use your own imagination 😊
3. Set the stage by arranging chairs, fabrics, textures, and objects around your home to as a backdrop for your portrait
4. Begin to draw your portrait and the surrounding space (use colored pencils, markers, crayons, or whatever you'd like)
5. Cut, paste and layer other materials like pieces of fabric, paper, and glitter to decorate your space while you bring your portrait to life!
6. Share your portrait with friends & family to honor that special woman.

MATERIALS:

- Colored Pencils
- Markers
- Crayons
- Magazines
- Pieces of fabric
- Paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Glitter



Le déjeuner sur l'herbe: Les Trois Femmes Noires, 2010
Rhinestone, Acrylic, and Enamel on Panel
120 × 288 × 2 in

“I am proud to be able to exhibit my work and inspire young people. Especially young black women so they know that they are beautiful, that they don't have to hold onto any negative stereotypes.”

-Mickalene Thomas

A woman with dark hair, wearing a white dress with a large floral pattern, stands on the left. A man with short hair, wearing a dark jacket over a light shirt and dark pants, stands in the center with his hands in his pockets. They are in a gallery with large, colorful abstract art pieces on the walls and a table with more art in the foreground.

FOLLOW UP:

Who did you choose for your portrait? Why?

How did you arrange your space for your portrait?

Where there any objects that were important to include?

Did you use your imagination or draw from life?

What materials did you choose for your collage?

How did you share your finished work of art?

Why do you think it's important to celebrate diverse women?

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