

**tête-à-tête**

Curated by Mickalene Thomas

July 12 – August 24, 2012

Opening reception for the artists on July 12, 2012



The Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present *tête-à-tête*, a group exhibition of work by Derrick Adams, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Jayson Keeling, Deana Lawson, Zanele Muholi, Clifford Owens, Mahlot Sansosa, Malick Sidibe, Xaviera Simmons, Mickalene Thomas, and Hank Willis Thomas.

In January of 2012 the Friends of Education of the Museum of Modern Art, New York invited Derrick Adams, Clifford Owens, and Xaviera Simmons to participate in “Conversation: Among Friends.” This discussion inspired Mickalene Thomas to question ideas surrounding collaborative work, and to consider the performative process in which a conversation is transformed into a visual expression.

*Tête-à-tête* includes photography by both African and African-American artists, and asks us to consider the conceptual idea of the black body and what that means in today’s society. Mickalene Thomas was interested in the performative way in which male artists use their physical presence and body in relation to the viewer, and the way many female artists see themselves through the gaze of another (often male). Clifford Owens inverts the art historical male gaze and creates a “black male on male gaze.” Derrick Adams responds to these ideas more abstractly in “Communicating with Shadows,” a collection of performances in which he created enlarged, projected silhouette impressions of artists such as Joseph Beuys, David Hammons, and Adrian Piper as a means of developing a personal conversation. In the “Faces and Phases” series, currently on view at Documenta 13 (pictured above), Zanele Muholi photographed black lesbians she met through the South African townships as a commemoration and a celebration of their lives. She established relationships with her subjects based on a mutual understanding of what it means to be female, lesbian and black in South Africa today. Deana Lawson, much like Muholi, creates photographs that serve as visual testimonies of familial relationships, sexuality, and life cycles. LaToya Ruby Frazier’s short video is a collaboration between the artist and her mother, exploring themes regarding the body and landscape, familial and communal history, private and public space and human complexity. According to Frazier, her videos are also “psychological portraits of the identity of the body and how surrounding outside spaces shape and form it physically.”

Also exhibited are Mickalene Thomas’ “Polaroid Series,” compositions of archival digital Polaroid prints, which provide insight into her artistic process. As if looking through a keyhole, the images expose Thomas’ subjects (many of whom are also portrayed in her prints, photographs, and paintings), as she herself would have seen them. The groupings, notes, and various arrangements not only articulate the intimate conversations between artist and subject, but also reveal the selection process by which Thomas creates her narratives.

For further information or press photography please contact [irios@yanceyrichardson.com](mailto:irios@yanceyrichardson.com). Hours: Monday-Friday from 10am – 6PM for the duration of this show.

**UPCOMING SHOWS:** Laura Letinsky: *Ill Form & Void Full* – Sept. 6 – Oct. 13, 2012  
Jitka Hanzlova: *Forest* – Oct. 18 – Nov. 24, 2012