

MIAMI

By Neil Vazquez



“TÊTE-A-TÊTE” at David Castillo Gallery.

In its sixth iteration, “**tête-à-tête**” highlights the work of fourteen photographers—curated by and featuring the work of **Mickalene Thomas**. Known for vibrant images that often render her close friends and colleagues as subjects, Thomas blends oblique references to the work of canonical painters with African studio photographers, whose work documented colonial histories. In *Portrait of Sidra Sitting*, for example, Thomas casually alludes to Manet’s *lympia* with a subject that looks beyond the limits of the frame to challenge the viewer with a completely self-possessed sense of agency. Much like her own photographs, the images in show tackle representations of black bodies in the media and their germinating socio-political and personal narratives. Her new role as curator extends her work directly behind the lens to one encouraging thoughtful dialogue between fellow photographers, including Wangechi Mutu and Lyle Ashton Harris. Thomas recently celebrated the launch of her new book, “Muse,” with a signing and panel discussion at Nicole Ehrlich’s fourth annual Celebration of Women in Art, during Art Basel Miami Beach. “Tête-à-tête” is currently on view at the David Castillo Gallery through January 31, 2017.

“DENVER,” 2008, **Xavier Simmons**
COLOR PHOTOGRAPH, 40" X 50"
PHOTO: COURTESY DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY