



## Bedazzling!

Mickalene Thomas often works with rhinestones, glitter, and enamel. Inspired by art history, popular culture, and Pop art, her depictions of African American women examine concepts of female identity and beauty.



## A-E-I-O-U and Sometimes Y, 2009

### Take a closer look

Working from a digital projection of a photo-booth snapshot, **Mickalene Thomas (b. 1971)** outlines her subject's contours in black rhinestones. At first glance, the glossy pink panel looks perfectly uniform, as if machine-made. Closer inspection reveals subtle color variations and paint layers that confirm Thomas's creative presence.

### In her own words

"I feel like the rhinestones in my paintings are like that really glossy lipstick that women wear. It's another level of masking, of dressing up."

### Who knew?

Thomas titles many of her works after songs. "AEIOU Sometimes Y" was a dance club and MTV hit in 1983 for the two-man group Ebn-Ozn. (Catch the video on YouTube.)

Mickalene Thomas, *A-E-I-O-U and Sometimes Y*, 2009; Plastic rhinestones, acrylic, and enamel on panel; 24 x 20 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Deborah Carstens; © 2009 Mickalene Thomas, Courtesy of the artist and Lehmann Maupin; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth

