

## **Paper**

### **September 2011**

#### **The Last Look: Mickalene Thomas**

By Carlo McCormick

Most widely known for her lavishly rhinestone bejeweled paintings, Mickalene Thomas will be unleashing her formidable preparatory work of photography, collage and photomontage this month at Lehmann Maupin Gallery's downtown space. Thomas' collage work is at once symbiotic to her paintings and distinctly compelling pictures on their own terms using models (like in the one shown here) with her self-designed sets, and layered with myriad visual elements all juxtaposed and compounded to produce an ornately decorative baroque spectacle. Thomas mines the seductive power of a beauty that is disconcertingly confrontational. Having shown the first portrait of Michelle Obama at the National Portrait Gallery, and subversively vamping Manet's "Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe," in the window of MoMA, Thomas is now finishing up a residency at Monet's Giverny gardens and preparing for solo exhibitions at the Santa Monica Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Museum this coming year.