

CRISTIN TIERNEY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

***Be My Guest: The Art of Interiors*  
Seven Artists Including Mickalene Thomas and Barbara Bloom  
Explore the Theme of Home**

**New York, NY – March 17, 2016** – On view from April 18 until May 10 and staged in an empty, luxurious Upper East Side apartment, the artists Barbara Bloom, Teresa Diehl, Ghost of a Dream, Misha Kahn, Jean Shin, Ena Swansea, and Mickalene Thomas have transformed the space with work that resonates with their ideas of home—whether it be the subject of their compositions or as a point of departure. Through distance, scale, and irony, the home, a symbolic embodiment of family and security, becomes a commentary on belonging, sexual or racial identity, consumerism, and human aspiration. *Be My Guest: The Art of Interiors* is located at 15 East 70<sup>th</sup> Street and is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 am – 5:00 pm, with viewing times available by appointment.

Designing rooms around works of art is the driving philosophy; here, art takes center stage. It is the heart and soul of the space, and is unified with the interior design to immerse the visitor in an exceptional, curated environment. Each artist's work and his or her perspective on home define each space and the furniture, decorative objects, carpets and tabletop accents complement and contextualize the installation. Each space offers a different interpretation of how art and design influence each other.

**Mickalene Thomas** presents photographs of her mother and longtime muse, Sandra Bush, in the living room. Sandra poses on sofas in ornate interiors often gleaned from the pages of design magazines, fittingly subtitled “How to Design a Room Around a Striking Piece of Art.” The sets are mostly created in a wood-paneled corner of Thomas' studio. The couches, props, and boxes of fabric are set up for each shoot and have recently been incorporated into exhibitions of her work. Also on display is one of Thomas' collages, entitled *Left Behind Again 2*, which is comprised from over twenty printed and assembled elements and expresses complex notions of race, female beauty, and identity. Thomas' work is in many prestigious public collections, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, MoMA PS1, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

In the dining room, **Ghost of a Dream**, the collaborative effort of Adam Eckstrom and Lauren Was, have repurposed discarded lottery tickets to form the installation entitled *Dream Home*. Their work embodies the essence of opulence while being constructed of materials that typically end up in the trash. They mine popular culture searching for abandoned materials once viewed as a pathway to dreams or wealth. *Dream Home* is composed of \$70,000 worth of discarded lottery tickets from the United States, England, France, and Germany. The artists work as a collective in Brooklyn and Wassaic, New York, and have been awarded numerous solo shows in galleries including Davidson Contemporary in New York and Galerie Paris-Beijing in Paris.

**Teresa Diehl's** work is a hallucinatory and meditative feast for the senses. *El Nido*, installed in the master bedroom, is a video and sound installation of sixty floor-to-ceiling hand-crocheted, translucent panels, which create layers of protection around the central structure of the original bed canopy. Projections of birds in slow motion flight overlap onto the nest-like structure, much like a dream sequence, intended to induce heightened levels of awareness and peace. When describing the installation, Diehl asks, “What is a bedroom but a physical space where we could

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feel safe to fly away?” Her work has been exhibited in several international institutions, including the Museum Montanelli in Prague, Czech Republic and the Museo de Artes Visuales in Caracas, Venezuela.

**Barbara Bloom** is best known for smart, conceptual installations that mock fine taste and effete dilettantism, while acknowledging the seductive charms of high culture. Her installation in the music room suggests an elegant surrounding where music is an integral part of the genteel atmosphere of an educated, upper class home. Her signature rugs, music stands, and photographs that are on view allude to an ensemble of references to music. Bloom’s work is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, the Australian National Gallery, and the Stedelijk Museum, among other important institutions. She was also included in the major exhibition, *Pictures Generation*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2009.

Sharing the music room is **Ena Swansea**, whose sofas break down barriers between real and imagined worlds. Inspired by the efficiency of reversible clothing, Swansea pursued the idea of reversible furniture that welcomes different functions and moods. Each sofa can be changed from serene white fur to landscape or party themed images selected from the artist’s paintings. Conceived as a curving steel form, her sofas are also multi-functional. By day, a large hidden bookshelf that winds across the back makes the furniture an ideal host for quiet study or meditation or to hold a cup of coffee. By night, these same shelves can accommodate drinks or props for unfettered recreational scenarios. In addition to solo gallery shows in New York and Berlin, Swansea has participated in several group exhibitions, including at MoMA PS1, Friedman Benda in New York, and Kunsthalle Wein in Vienna.

In the passageway, two mirrors from **Misha Kahn’s** Saturday Morning Series are on display. Currently, Kahn has a solo exhibition at Friedman Benda, entitled *Return of Saturn*, for which he has created an immersive environment, complete with floor and wall coverings inspired by the linoleum floors of his childhood summer home. He looks to objects, such as these mirrors, as stored memories about life in a consumer society and as sources of nostalgia, encouraging “comfort with one’s own mental chaos.” Kahn has additionally been included in the Biennials of the Museum of Art and Design and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

In the foyer leading to the dining room is **Jean Shin’s** *Grafted Settings (Tree)*, which investigates the historical and cultural connotations of flatware. Forks, spoons and knives form delicate branches, the curves of annual rings, and textured layers of bark, suggesting a harmonious coexistence of culture and nature. The tree alludes to family rituals of the home, and—like setting a table—suggests memories both personal and communal. Shin is also transforming the bedroom closet into a jewel box entitled *Rapture*, a site-specific assemblage of over three hundred necklaces and jewelry pedestals, which speaks to the chain of consumerism, while existing within the intimate, personal space of a wardrobe. Shin’s work has been widely exhibited, including solo exhibitions at The Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington DC and The Museum of Modern Art, among others.

The furniture and decorative elements on view throughout the spaces are from Bunny Williams Home, Farrow & Ball, Hermes, Lalique, Newel, Puiforcat, Saint-Louis, Stark Carpet, and The Rug Company.

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**Be My Guest** will also feature a selection of artworks from the **Hetrick-Martin Institute's** Youth Arts and Culture program. As part of the collaboration with No Longer Empty, HMI students worked with artist Renzo Ortega to produce original linocut prints using collage and watercolor. After preparing a body of collective and individual artworks responding to the theme of home, student participants gained hands-on experience curating their own exhibition within *Be My Guest*, through No Longer Empty's signature educational workshops designed to train youth in the art of curating. The proceeds from the sale of these works will benefit HMI.

No Longer Empty, in association with *Galerie* magazine, has organized *Be My Guest: The Art of Interiors*. The exhibition is curated by No Longer Empty founder and chief curator, Manon Slome and No Longer Empty Board Member and *Galerie* Arts Editor, Michael Steinberg. Both organizations seek to raise visibility and recognition for artists by showing emerging talent alongside well-established artists.

### About No Longer Empty:

No Longer Empty's mission is to activate public engagement with contemporary art through site specific, community-responsive exhibitions and education programs. Working in underutilized spaces to share diverse narratives of place, they believe that the arts can inspire each of us to engage with a deeper understanding of the world we live in, prompting action and change.

### About *Galerie*:

*Galerie* is magazine characterized by its dedication to connecting the worlds of art and design. With a sophisticated image, *Galerie* provides a curated perspective of the international art and design scene.

**For Reservations Contact: 212-675-4140 or [bmg@fremontblueevents.com](mailto:bmg@fremontblueevents.com)**

### Press Contact:

Stacy McLaughlin Communications  
Stacy McLaughlin: [stacy@smcpr.nyc](mailto:stacy@smcpr.nyc)  
Harrison Jackson: [harrison@smcpr.nyc](mailto:harrison@smcpr.nyc)