Mickalene Thomas: Better Nights is an immersive art experience inspired by a polaroid photograph of the artist’s mother from the 1980s. First introduced with Better Days in 2013, this new iteration unfolds into the second chapter of Thomas’ transformations of social “experiment” pleasures by re-imagining a black radical aesthetic and creating blackjoy. The installation embodies a feeling of home, yet also a speakeasy, conceptually reconstructed according to the domestic aesthetic of the period, including faux wood paneling, wallpaper and custom designed and reupholstered furniture with the artist’s signature textiles and mirrors. An extension of Thomas’ artistic universe, the installation plays with artifice, developed through intersections between real and faux elements.

The exhibition is an installation, performance space and bar that functions as an experience, a moment, a time and a place. Including a series of five geometric-patterned mirror works and two collages by the artist, the exhibition features a selection of painting, photography and video by emerging and prominent artists, curated by Thomas. Exhibiting artists include: painting and photography by Nina Chanel Abney, Derrick Adams, David Antonio Cruz, Lyle Ashton Harris, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Xaviera Simmons, John Edmonds, Alexandria Smith, Adrienne Raquel, Arielle Bobb-Willis, Micaiah Carter; and video work by Christie Neptune, Devin Morris, Brontez Purnell, and Ja’Tovia Gary (selected by Jasmine Wahi from Project for Empty Space).