

whitehot | February 2009, Zoe Crosher @ Eleanor Harwood Gallery



Zoe Crosher, "All About The Looking," 2007, Ink Jet Print mounted to Dibond with exan matte laminate; 48" x 33", courtesy New Langton Arts

Zoe Crosher: "AUTO PORTRAIT from the Reconsidered Archive of Michelle Du Bois" at Eleanor Harwood Gallery

8 November through 12 December 2008

[Eleanor Harwood Gallery](#)

1295 Alabama
San Francisco, CA 94110

by Katie Morgan

The huge, black-and-white close-up of a heavily lined eye says everything—and nothing. The glassy pupil stares back, reflecting the momentary glare of a camera's flash, seemingly self-satisfied in its pristine glamour. The subject of this image and others hanging nearby, though meticulously documented in the "archive" of the exhibition's title, is a mystery. And Michele Du Bois isn't even her real name.

Michele Du Bois is one of the many aliases of a woman who traveled around the Pacific Rim in the 70s and 80s enjoying an unconventional and sexually liberated lifestyle. She documented her travels extensively in a massive collection of photographs which photographer Zoe Crosher, perhaps best known for her *Out the Window (LAX)* series, has acquired. Crosher's ongoing project claims to "reconsider" these snapshots. It appears that she has scoured, sorted, and analyzed the collection, refigured in its new, biographical context as an "archive," singling out groupings of individual images that speak to her artistic sensibilities. She has reframed these images in groupings such as the *Polaroided Collection* and the *Analog Collection*. Individual photos have been re-titled to acknowledge this "reconsidering" and their new context.

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Zoe Crosher, *The Cindy-Shermanesque, But She's The Real Thing*, 2005, Installation View, Ink Jet Prints mounted to Plexiglas; Dimensions vary, courtesy New Langton Fine Arts



Zoe Crosher, *The Cindy-Shermanesque, But She's The Real Thing*, 2005, detail Ink Jet Print mounted to Plexiglas; 16" x 20" courtesy New Langton Fine Arts

The Cindy-Shermanesque, But She's The Real Thing, 2005, is a grouping of 12 photographs of Du Bois. In these images we get a sense of the full range of her personae—she is alternately blonde and brunette, stoic and seductive. Viewing these photographs separately and in a different context we might assume these were all different women. In a series of three images she glances over her shoulder at the photographer as she fixes her hair in a distinctly 70s apartment. In two others, she has aged several years and poses seductively in a cowboy hat, naked from the waist down. These photos are indeed reminiscent of Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* series in which she photographs herself in costume to play with and expose conventional female archetypes and clichés in popular culture.

Zoe Crosher's exhibition refigures Du Bois' "archive" as a portrait of a life. This portrait is incomplete and blurry, yet as viewers we are seduced by the romance of the life she led and the mystery that surrounds her. The selection of photographs at Eleanor Harwood effectively shows the remarkable range of images of Du Bois and hints at what it might mean to view the archive in its entirety. Ultimately, the viewer is left wanting more, but the ambiguity and incompleteness of Du Bois' character sparks the imagination and allows us to fill in the blanks with our own interpretation.



NAIL is a curatorial collective in San Francisco California.
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