

# ARTFORUM

## Zoe Crosher

ELEANOR HARWOOD GALLERY  
1295 Alabama Street  
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Like a character wrested from a lost cache of Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Stills" dressed in something from Madonna's recent roller-disco fashion spree, the subject of Zoe Crosher's "The Reconsidered Archive of Michelle DuBois" is a tart cocktail who's equal measure campy, pathological, and photographically astute. Crosher, who has often worked with images of constructed female identity, here finds inspiration in a found archive of photographs of a free-spirited sexual adventurer whose stylized personae peaked with 1970s bubble baths and gleaming early-'80s ABBA hairstyles. The so-called Michelle DuBois, who borrows theatrical elements of Tennessee Williams's Blanche DuBois and *Scarface*-era Michelle Pfeiffer, is just one of the pseudonyms the busty lady inhabited (others are noted in a work composed of a series of signatures, forged by Crosher), and it's one that conveys a lurid strength. The factual details here are mostly eschewed—an exhibition statement reveals that there were sexual exploits and various alter egos that blazed a self-possessed carnal trail through Pacific Rim ports—so viewers have the pleasure of imagining the soap-opera narrative that might emerge from this well-edited series of self-portraits taken by others. (A few Polaroids, with Warholian overtones, feature the subject sitting with men whose faces are blacked out with Sharpies, reducing male power positions to shadows.) Crosher acknowledges her antecedent in a group of appropriated snapshots titled *The Cindy-Shermanesque, but She's the Real Thing*, 2005, and in a way, the sentiment almost encapsulates the project. Yet the subtext of truth, the notion that this is a real woman engaging in intentional masquerades, adds highly charged layers of psychological complexity. Some of the images, like a passport photo of "Michelle" in an unconvincing disguise of frumpy brunette wig and chunky glasses, seem to depict cheap Halloween costumes—but appear so knowingly theatrical that it's hard not to view "DuBois" as her own artist, one well schooled in the ever-evolving dialogues of identity.

— Glen Helfand



Zoe Crosher, *Kools, Schlitz and Matches from the Polaroided Collection*, 2008, color photograph and Sharpie, 5 x 3 1/2".