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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2012

ART

Review: group show of women artists at the Front

POSTED BY [D. ERIC BOOKHARDT](#) ON WED, JUN 13, 2012 AT 1:57 PM

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Bitch, You Confound by Lee Deigaard

Lately it feels as if the dog days of summer are upon us. In the art world, summer means group shows, so The Front's *You Beautiful Bitch* expo, in which eight female artists celebrate their animal companions, seems apropos. Women and their pets is a complicated theme, but here we see some new views of the archetypal essence of dogness. Lee Deigaard's *Bitch, You Confound* features a headshot of a mutt in an electric moment of epiphany, as if the secret inner meaning of bone burying and crotch sniffing had just been revealed in a flash of canine enlightenment. Natalie McLaurin's video, *He Needs Me*, depicts the artist with her head and shoulders partially buried in her yard as her dog circumnavigates her torso in a chthonic dramatization of the deeper meanings of love and dirt. Mythic riffs abound in Monica Zeringue's eerily bejeweled wolverine headpiece, even as Kathy High's trans-species wall projection of *Cat's Eyes* beamed through a fish bowl reminds us that felines can be bitchy too. But that's what pets are for: to console us and make us crazy.

In the next gallery, Claire Rau's *Permission* installation features apocryphal furniture parts leaning inexplicably against a wall. Replacing Duchamp's "readymades" with improbable handmade objects, Rau quietly yet provocatively questions the meaning of art, craft and aesthetics. In Nicole Jean Hill's *Artifacts and Incidents* landscape photographs, some sculpturally bullet-riddled beer cans and the skin of a gutted deer seemingly deep in sleep slyly undermine our preconceptions of truth and beauty. But Jan Gilbert's *30 Years* wall documentation of her own public art projects is a compendium of graphic art about public art, a visual archive in which a room becomes a time capsule reflecting an epoch of creative endeavor. Meanwhile, in the

backyard, Gilbert and Babette Beaulieu's flapping "Cajun" prayer flags seem to celebrate the passing of life's (hurricane) seasons.

Through July 8
You Beautiful Bitch; Works by Jan Gilbert, Claire Rau and Nicole Jean Hill
Saturdays and Sundays
The Front, 4100 St. Claude Ave., 920-3980

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