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Eve: I'm Every Woman

By Shana Nys Dambrot

The best thematic group shows explore not what the disparate artists under their given rubrics might share, but rather how their differences move the chosen topic of conversation forward. The temptation with shows based on race, gender or some narrowly defined subject matter like architecture or food is to look for (often forced or overstated) commonalities. But Subliminal Projects bucks that tradition with its take on the summer-season group show, *Eve*, "an intelligent look at the wildly diverse practices of a selection of female artists, most of whom have been active and influential in the art world for decades.

This is not a show that claims a monolithic ladyship aesthetic -- far from it. In fact, its very strength lies in the rich diversity of style, medium, point of view and background represented by the gathering. The show features pioneering installation artist Judy Chicago of Dinner Party fame; performance artist and feminist activist Mary Beth Edelson; iconic conceptual artist Hannah Wilke; watercolorist Kim McCarty, whose masterfully expressive work speaks directly to the messy beauty of unformed identities; the sociological and literature-inspired works of Ayanah Moor; Alex Prager's and Lisa Steele's photographic and video-based deconstructions of femininity; popular NYC-based street artist Swoon (one of the relatively few ladies in the MOCA show); and U.K.-based painter Stella Vine, whose brash and disarming portraits of friends, family and random celebrities make unforgettable emotional impressions. The fact that this talented crew shares little beyond gender markers is entirely the point, even as each of them makes work that directly addresses the status of women in our world.

Subliminal Projects, 1331 W. Sunset Blvd.; Sat., July 23, 8-11 p.m.; exhibit runs Tues.-Fri., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat., noon-5 p.m.; thru Aug. 20; free. (213) 213-0078, subliminalprojects.com.