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CULTURE MONSTER

ALL ARTS, ALL THE TIME

Courtney Love attempts her first gallery show

By David Ng

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A work of art by Courtney Love. (Fred Torres Collaborations / April 29, 2012)

Celebrity art shows usually don't merit much serious aesthetic consideration. But when the celebrity in question is Courtney Love -- the volatile Hole frontwoman and sometimes actress -- attention should be paid, if only to see how her outrageous personality expresses itself through art.

"And She's Not Even Pretty" is set to open this week at Fred Torres Collaborations in New York. The show is to feature more than 45 of Love's drawings, some of them of an explicit nature and many featuring fragments of her poetry and lyrics.

Yana Balson, director of the art space, said the show came about through Love's friendship with photographer Dave LaChapelle, who is a friend of Torres.

The gallery's news release for the show points out that Love studied fine art at the San Francisco Art Institute in the 1980s. It also notes that Love received some advice from Julian Schnabel for the gallery show.

Love's artwork portrays young, blond women in states of emotional despair. One of the more provocative pieces is titled "Keep It Up, Mother ..." and shows a woman crucified with blood running down her naked body. The piece features some of Love's writing, including the following passage:

"How you must have suffered getting accustomed to ME. My savage solitary soul -- my NAME that sends them all running ..."

Aside from her music and film career, Love has become notorious for her public outbursts and encounters with law enforcement officials. She has spoken publicly about her substance abuse problems.

This isn't Love's first foray into visual art, strictly speaking. She made a memorable appearance in Francesco Vezzoli's "Trailer for a Remake of Gore Vidal's Caligula." (She played Caligula.) Love's daughter, Frances Bean Cobain, had a solo show of her drawings at the La Luz de Jesus Gallery in Hollywood in 2010.

"And She's Not Even Pretty" is scheduled to run through June 15.