

Samantha Crain

Anais Nin said, “Each contact with a human being is so rare, so precious, one should preserve it.” That suggestion is the muse impelling the conception of **Samantha Crain’s** second LP, *You (Understood)*, set for release June 8 on Ramseur Records.

It’s a follow-up to her debut releases, *The Confiscation* EP (2008), a “musical novella” that had critics saying of the 21-year-old Crain’s literary writing style: “the Native American spirituality of N. Scott Momaday’s *In The Bear’s House* just as likely influences the songstress as the violence and destructive sexuality of the Depression-era characters in Erskine Caldwell’s *Tobacco Road*” (*Paste Magazine*), as well as the *Songs In The Night* LP (2009), of which *Rolling Stone* critic Will Hermes wrote: “Her voice is gorgeously odd — all fulsome, shape-shifting vowels that do indeed billow like fog. But while her moody country rock is full of dark themes, she rarely gives in to them.”

There is a story behind the making of *You (Understood)*, which Crain describes as her “attempt to preserve her contact with some human beings, 16 to be exact.” These 16 people affected her through the writing and recording of these songs, and *You (Understood)* is her monument to those sporadic and revered chapters, now captured forever on this recording.

For a project that engages in so much dissection, Crain solicited Joey Lemon, producer of her *Confiscation EP* and guru of the Midwestern avant-garde band, Berry, to help her glue it all back together. They, along with Eric Nauni (Student Film) and Ben Wigler (Arizona, New Beard), recorded the 11 songs in seven days at Joey’s studio in a white pole barn on the north side of Wichita, KS.

Feeling the importance of giving each of these songs a sound as customized as the experiences and the people themselves, Crain reached out for different tools than on her last release, the country-tinged *Songs In the Night* LP. The guitars got fuzzier, the time signatures got modified, the drums got audacious, the spaces got bigger, the highs were higher, and the lows were lower. She got caught up in it, caught up in the decibels and the dynamics and the people.

Each song on this album rests on a juncture with a person, a real person, and it recounts a particular episode of life with that person. The scenes and the people are not especially unusual or stirring but the idea that the precise installment will never, in all of time, happen again was enough to interest Crain. She is taking a microscope to the simplest of human interactions and feelings, turning them over in her hands, looking at them from all angles, measuring them on all sides, and taking them apart, realizing they really are *exceptional*, but only in the smallest ways.

With *You (Understood)*, Crain once again looks closely at life and people and is able to conjure a mood to bring the listener into her own magical world; where the ordinary is weird and stories unfold in a voice that - once heard, is unforgettable.