

FRISKY AT THE WHITNEY

March 24, 2014

MAURA HAVERLY

After a lovely brunch with a few glasses of a refreshing beverage (rhymes with Medoc) I took myself off to the Whitney Biennial. The show asks "what is contemporary art in the United States now". And I 'm not sure that this show has the answer. 103 participants, many of them collectives or groups of more than,2 artists. textiles, video, sound pieces, paintings, drawings, pictures of pink puppies, , mannequins of 3 women dressed in hipster clothes titled (I kid you not) We are all Pussy Riot, We are all Pussy Galore). And some very un-family friendly stuff that didn't even have a sense of humor.

As New York magazine put it, "I see dead art".

Good stuff? A lot of the 4 th floor, curated by Michelle Grabner. Ben Kinmont, represented by the always interesting Air de Paris. His work, Sshhh, was about documentation of exhibitions...and incorporates letters viewers write to him about the work. You could write to himtoo...the complementary pictures by Sarah Charlesworth were rather wonderful (also on 4)as were the chandeliers by Joel Otterson, " bottoms up" (and I bet you can guess why I liked them) composed of 187 vintage glasses and goblets.

Another standout (although it left me scratching my head). Ken Lump, "Midway Shopping Plaza". Which looks just like a sign for, you guessed it, a South Vietnamese shopping Plaza in Philadlephia, his hometown . With some surprises.

And the new, new thing? The quite surprising work by Ken Okiishi on the third floor. All called "gesture/data" and all from 2013, Okiishi, represented by New York gallery Reena Spaulings, painted flat screens, which showed videos from flash drives. I know, it sounds confusing, but it was pretty impressive.

The things that I found to be not one bit impressive were pretty numerous too, but I won't name them...because my glass is empty.