

Real Hartford

a city cannot be reduced to a slogan

Allison Schulnik's MATRIX 168

By Kerri Provost, March 9, 2014 4:15 pm



Still of a short video by Allison Schulnik

The way I experienced the latest MATRIX installation was to just show up, only having seen the banner. If you like the feel of putting together a puzzle, skip this article and just go see the exhibit.

For the rest of you, read on.

Here's your homework: go watch *Return to Oz* (yes, again) and pay special attention to Nome King's "Ornaments Room." This is one of the creepiest "family" movies ever. When done, go to the Wadsworth Atheneum and enter Allison Schulnik's MATRIX 168.



Still of short video by Allison Schulnik

To enter the theater, first you will have to walk through a gallery of glazed ceramic and porcelain creatures— a bear, fox, and cat among them. It's hard to resist touching the figures that almost insist on being picked up, but unless you want to get to know a security guard really well, work on suppressing the urge.

Whimsical feels like a word that has been overused, yet it's the first that comes to mind here and when watching the films. As you watch, you wonder: How can something be so saccharine and innocent, then grotesque moments later? What if Tim Burton used Peeps in stop-motion animation? Schulnik uses clay, not marshmallow candies, but you may find yourself oddly drawn to Mallomars at the grocery store after viewing these films.

The films are visually striking, so even if you are not unsure of plot or purpose, there's something with which to be fascinated as they run on loops.

The MATRIX 168 will be on display in the Wadsworth Atheneum through May 4, 2014.

Source: <http://www.realhartford.org/2014/03/09/allison-schulniks-matrix-168/>