

Francesco Bonami Interview, vernissage.tv*

by Francesco Bonami, Feb 23, 2010

Transcript excerpt of a two-minute section from the 8-minute interview in which Francesco Bonami, chief curator of the 2010 Whitney Biennial, speaks about O'Grady's piece and the room it shared with Bruce High Quality Foundation.

TRANSCRIPT: section 4:55-7:00 of *Interview with Francesco Bonami* (8:10), vernissage.tv.

Francesco Bonami: It's not a huge show, it's not the biggest show I ever curated, but maybe it's the most important for me because it's transformed me from an outsider when I came here 27 years ago into. . . I don't want to say a true American, but into part of this big thing that is very strange to define, that is an American concept. . . part of "The American Dream." It may be banal and a little bit soppy in sound. But for an outsider to curate the biennial of American art is a bit of a dream come true.

I can NOT pick a specific work, each work has a function in the show. I can pick a ROOM, the room on the fourth floor with Bruce High Quality Foundation, a group of artists that work collectively. They have this car with a film made of a patchwork of American images and with a text written by them on America as a lover. It is a love story without a happy ending.

And next. . . and in front of it, there is a work by the LEAST young artist in the show, Lorraine O'Grady, an Afro-American artist who makes a very interesting comparison between Michael Jackson and Charles Baudelaire, the French poet. . . looking at them as two fathers of different kinds of modernity—Baudelaire,

* Vernissage.tv, "Whitney Biennial 2010." Interview of curator Francesco Bonami which makes note of O'Grady and her work. Video online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yETwI7Mf-Q> Transcript of comment about O'Grady online at: http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=427664229477

for what is the Western world, and Michael Jackson, for pop culture and Afro-American culture in America—and yet, Lorraine O’Grady looks very young. The worlds of the two artists touch, become one thing, the past and the present become one thing.

I think this is a room that in some way summarizes the spirit of this exhibition.