

March 27, 2009

Art in Review

By HOLLAND COTTER

CARY LEIBOWITZ

Alexander Gray

526 West 26th Street, Chelsea

Through Saturday

When boys start routinely marrying boys and girls start marrying girls, couples will need look no further for a bridal registry than Cary Leibowitz's muggery, a fictive emporium that produces and distributes his determinedly nondeluxe tableware -- coffee mugs, wine glasses, highball tumblers and more.

For Mr. Leibowitz design is less about form than content. Basically what he's selling is cheapo-generic retail but customized with texts of his invention. In what might be called his American Heritage line, for example, you can choose between mugs emblazoned with "George Washington Redecorates Mount Vernon" or "Abraham Lincoln's Friend Sleeps Over."

In a slightly more contemporary vein there's "Judy and Liza Fly to the Moon" stemware. Or perhaps you will go for expressions of personal sentiments. And Mr. Leibowitz can get very personal, as he does on a tumbler attesting to the agony and the ecstasy -- minus the ecstasy -- of being an artist.

Having a show is public humiliation

The only thing worse than having a show is not having a show

The only thing worser is not getting paid after something is sold

Worst bit of all is waiting for a compliment ...

Revues? Revues??????????? Don't make me laugh!

Whew. So let me just say that this is another terrific show in an important career. (Why isn't someone lining up a retrospective?) It made me laugh. And the art, at \$15 to \$100 an item, is a cash-and-carry steal. Point to the piece(s) you want, pay up, and you're ready to start your new life as a couple. Or alone. (There's an "I Am Prepared to Fail, But I Am Never Really That Prepared" mug.) Or whatever. HOLLAND COTTER