

Whitney Claffin - Pinky's Where? - Derosia

In contradistinction to all this talk of a crisis of subject matter, doubly so with painting, triply so with abstract mark-making as painting, Whitney seems to have no trouble coming up with things to paint. At first I was going to attribute it to her being a generation older than me and therefore capable of “doing Krebber/Cologne painting” without coming off as contrived, and that could be part of it, but I think it’s even more that she’s been painting for long enough that she knows what she’s doing and knows how to have fun with it. Or, to put it more precisely, she’s at a place where her way of painting belongs to her, no matter the references you could pull, so she’s free to make her own paintings where younger painters worry about coming up with signature tricks to distinguish themselves. Real distinguishment comes from hard work and the accumulation of experience, and Whitney’s work has a tendency to deal with that accumulation very explicitly inasmuch that she tends to and cultivates her own personal constellations of reference and iconography. As a consequence she can paste in a part of the Thrasher logo, or paint the Forlini’s menu QR code, or the anarchy symbol, or *The Sifl and Olly Show*, and none of it signifies irony or NYC posturing or randomcore culture-mashing, or anything else that it would imply in another artist’s hands. I know she has intricate personal backstories for every element the show, and although I don’t know what any of them are, that personal logic drives the work in a way that makes painting feel alive and vital in a way that it very rarely does otherwise at the moment.