

ICON

Thom Nickels, February 2014

City Beat

At The Print Center on Latimer Street, we watched as our friend Regina crawled through an oversized dog door in a silo-like paper column into a dark womb-like space to see the planet Sirius, a la Fels Planetarium. After Regina was swallowed up, we moved into the Center's chapel, a darkened space with benches facing an eight-channel installed video featuring multiple close-ups of artist Demetrius Oliver's 2011 kinetic sculpture Orrery, a mechanical model of the solar system, best viewed from one of the aforementioned benches. We sat (in the dark) chatting with Frank Luzi of the Philadelphia Opera Company, while trying to figure out the meaning of it all, since the installation art exhibit had more in swirling symbols than a game of Candy Crush. "It's like a traveling Rosicrucian road show," we exclaimed, after which we also thought of the puzzles in James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. We're sorry that we missed the opening lecture by Derrick Pitts, chief astronomer at The Franklin Institute, on the mystery of Sirius, although we liked the fact that everyone present was an integral part of the show. Regina told us, "I'm not sure what this all means, but I'm sure it means something." Why does everyone say this? The Print Center is a venerable "best of" Philly institution, that's why it seemed odd to us that this Pew Charitable Trust-funded exhibit was Spartan when it came to reception fare: two small bowls of miniature pretzel nuggets and one person to pour carefully measured wine for the 100-plus people seemed a paltry nod to the wonders of the cosmos.