

# Kate Gilmore BY YAELLE AMIR *Kate*

Pierogi, Brooklyn NY November 17 - December 23, 2006

In her new video installation at Brooklyn's Pierogi, "Hopelessly Devoted," Kate Gilmore explores everyday frustrations and grievances. As sole participant in her performances, her witty and at times absurd metaphorical scenarios utterly lack self-awareness. By taking this unarmed approach, Gilmore manages to arouse our most fundamental anxieties and fears, while reassuring our sense of security.

In the 12:24-minute *Anything...* (2006), a sweet-looking Gilmore in red summer dress tries to construct a tower out of furniture and string, enabling her to climb up and reach a camera installed high above. Following each failed attempt, she descends the precarious mount of chairs and tables she has already assembled, only to add another tier and try again. When finally at the top, Gilmore gropes at, yet never quite succeeds in obtaining, her invisible target. Throughout, she projects an aura of relentless optimism and naive determination.

Gilmore's 4:59-minute, two-channel *Main Squeeze* (2006) shows her crawling on hands and knees along a narrow, slanted 10-foot-long wooden tunnel, roughly the width of the artist's body. At the entrance and exit of this confined passageway she has positioned TV monitors for the viewer to observe her tirelessly struggling to free herself. Along the way we witness Gilmore chafing her elbows and knees, undergoing a bout of claustrophobia, and her attire getting caught on a nail. Breathing heavily and noticeably exhausted, she



finally manages to extricate herself.

Due to the overall positioning of Gilmore's camera, the quality of her videos seems raw at times, giving them the feel of a clandestine home movie or documentary. Yet while acknowledging the camera's authorial presence, the viewers, situated in the very eye of the storm, find themselves dragged haphazardly into discomfiting scenarios. Gilmore's determination to achieve a seemingly simple task under trying circumstances thus does double duty in the automatic nervous reflexes adopted by spectators, like frustration, hopelessness, exhaustion, and relief. In candidly revealing her own trials and tribulations, Gilmore creates emotional portraits mirroring the most basic hardships. For this reason we do not feel any particular empathy for the actual physical predicament she is in, but rather for the ensuing psychological turmoil in ourselves.