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Kate Gilmore

By Lyra Kilston

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What is clear, though, is that Gilmore is wryly commenting on the classic third-wave feminist conundrum: Do we reject a constricting, male-defined femininity, or have we now arrived at a point where we are empowered enough to "have it all" and can welcome back our dainty accessories? Gilmore herself asserts that her intentions are not limited to the experience of being female. Like Sisyphus, or the female protagonist in **Kobo Abe's** novel *Woman of the Dunes*, who must shovel sand all day long in order to survive, senseless struggle becomes a metaphor for existence (notably, Gilmore's upcoming project in Miami will involve sand). And while Gilmore's videos may seem to read as exercises in pure futility, she sees them as expressions of defiance. Indeed, because of her enlivening dismissal of complacency or defeat, the sense of revolt in her works is contagious. In the cringe-inducing video *With Open Arms* (2005), Gilmore is dressed in a strappy lavender dress with a matching flower in her hair. Behind her, the backdrop is frosted with awkward silver stars. She spreads her arms outward in a "ta-da!" gesture, smiling broadly. An overripe tomato is hurled toward her and hits the backdrop with a smack. This repeats: "ta-da!" smack "ta-da!" smack. Soon covered with dripping red pulp, she continues to present herself with effusive confidence, despite an invisible public of detractors.

Kate Gilmore's work is on view at Franco Soffiantino Arte Contemporanea, Turin, through Apr. 18 and will be on view at Locust Projects, Miami, in May.

"Kate Gilmore" originally appeared in the March 2009 issue of Modern Painters. For a complete list of articles from this issue available on ARTINFO, see Modern Painters' [March 2009 Table of Contents](#).



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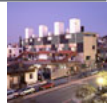
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