

**Kate Gilmore: A Tisket, A Tasket**  
October 18 through December 14, 2013

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**Museum Hours:**

Tuesday: 10 AM – 8 PM; Wednesday – Friday: 10 AM – 5 PM  
Saturday: 12 – 4 PM; Closed Thursday, November 28.  
Telephone: 518-442-4035 | www.albany.edu/museum

**Artist Biography**

Kate Gilmore was born in Washington, D.C. in 1975 and lives and works in New York City. Her work has been exhibited at the 2010 Whitney Biennial; the Brooklyn Museum; The Kitchen; Indianapolis Museum of Art; Bryant Park (Public Art Fund); Locust Projects; White Columns; Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati; Artplace; The J. Paul Getty Museum; The Rose Art Museum; and PS1/MoMA Contemporary Art Center. Gilmore has been the recipient of several international awards and honors, such as the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Award for Artistic Excellence, Franklin Furnace Fund for Performance, LMCC Workspace Residency, New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, and The Marie Walsh Sharpe Space Residency. Her work is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art; the Brooklyn Museum; the Whitney Museum of American Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

**Acknowledgements**

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# Exhibition Checklist

*A Tisket, A Tasket*, 2013  
Single channel video, 32:14 minutes; color; sound  
Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery

*Break of Day*, 2010  
Single channel video, 18:34 minutes; color; sound  
Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery

*Pot, Kettle, Black*, 2010  
Single channel video, 11:54 minutes; color; sound  
Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery

*Standing Here*, 2010  
Single channel video, 10:47 minutes; color; sound  
Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery

*Between a Hard Place*, 2008  
Single channel video, 9:43 minutes; color; sound  
Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery

*Star Bright, Star Might*, 2007  
Single channel video, 7:36 minutes; color; sound  
Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery

*Anything*, 2006  
Single channel video, 12:24 minutes; color; sound  
Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery

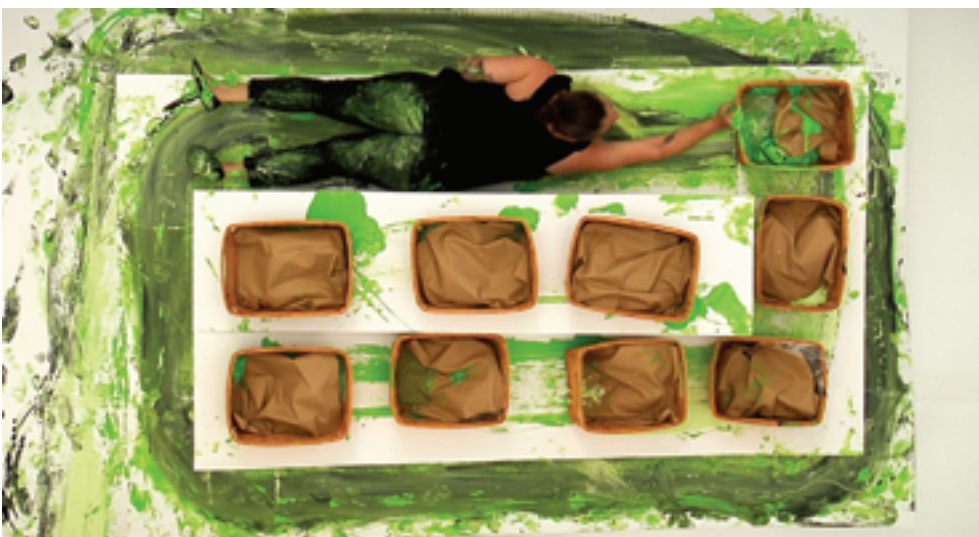
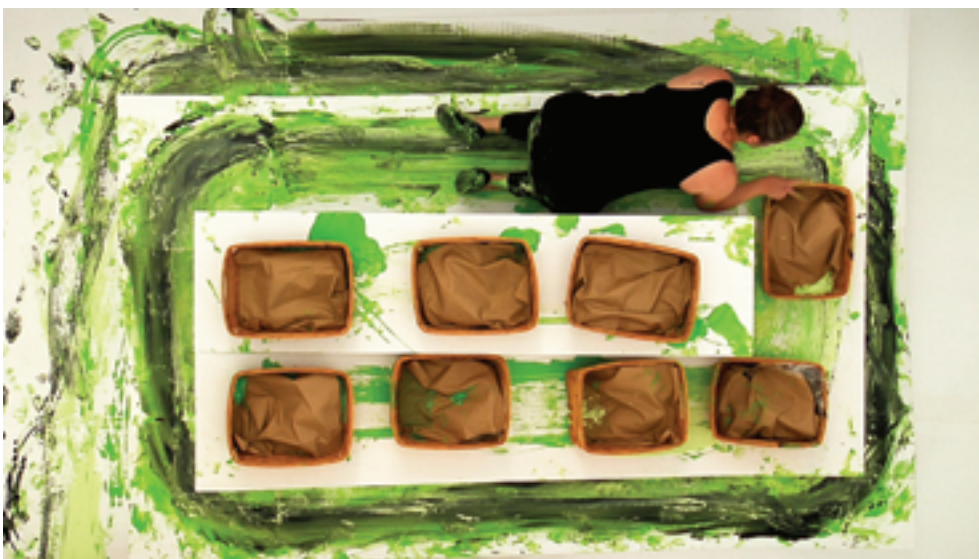
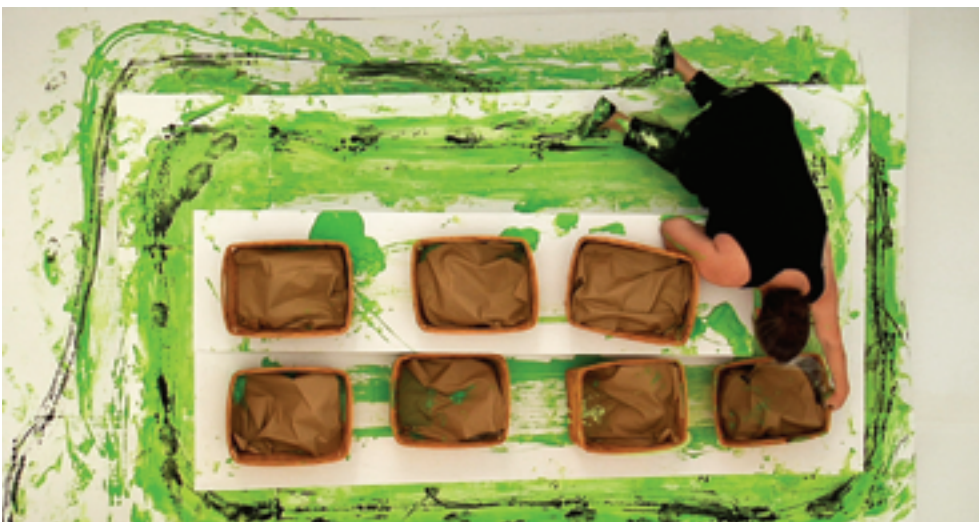
*My Love is an Anchor*, 2004  
Single channel video, 7:05 minutes; color; sound  
Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery



# Kate Gilmore

## A Tisket, A Tasket





## Kate Gilmore

On the occasion of their concurrent one-person exhibitions at the University Art Museum, artists Kate Gilmore and Suzanne McClelland interviewed each other via email. Summer 2013

Suzanne McClelland: Kate, there are a number of aspects of your work that fascinate me, and I realize now that we haven't ever addressed them directly or formally. Do you usually eliminate spoken language or text in your work? I find that in your performances, the physical gesture has a singular power. When combined with sounds of material crashing or dropping or splattering, the effect is mesmerizing because there's no language driving the action. You seem to isolate the physical and allow sound in as a support for the action. I just saw *The Great Dictator* again the other night, after many years, and it's transformative...genius from beginning to end, and he [Charlie Chaplin] made it before the war [World War II] too. Do you look at Chaplin or Buster Keaton or Lucille Ball or Carol Burnett? The language and sounds are important with Lucy and Carol, but no sound with the silent films...do you use language in your work at any point, and do you write a script or draw for the video?

Kate Gilmore: I never have direct language in my work unless it's something that comes up naturally to express some sort of frustration or moment of struggle (this usually includes the words "shit," "fuck," "Jesus"). The rest of the "language" in the pieces is usually grunting, heavy breathing, and sighs of relief or frustration. People have often talked about my work in relation to Chaplin and Keaton—references that I love. How they use their bodies and their expressions to speak is something that I'm definitely interested in. Comedy is a

huge part of my work. Carol Burnett and Lucille Ball are amazing references. I often think about Lucille Ball's assembly-line scene [in the "chocolate factory" episode of "I Love Lucy"], where she's trying to put everything together but the conveyor belt is going too fast for her to keep up. She needs to improvise. This scene seems to sum up a lot of my work. Starting out with a logic—"This should work!"—no matter how absurd, and then through the process everything gets out of whack, and it's my job to fix it. Inevitably comedy comes into play here because it's always funny to see people off-kilter, on the edge of failure or danger. That moment is really interesting to me.

I'll be dealing with this kind of thing in my new piece in Albany. A structure will be made that will force me to have to create something that will be in one sense beautiful, art historically referential, but at the same time will be completely absurd, like an out-of-control assembly line. In this piece, we'll be making a climbing structure—the architecture just calls for it, and those high ceilings are perfect for shooting from above. The shot will be looking down at the piece and the action, sort of flattening the space and filling the frame of the camera. Very referential to painting. The piece—not to reveal too much—will involve wicker baskets, leaking paint, moving up spiral ramps, and drawing. I actually really don't know how it will turn out, but I'm fully confident of all the individual elements.

For me, the fun part of making work is not knowing what it will end up being. Understanding the materials involved and my capabilities as a body, but not having a full comprehension of what the end product will be. It allows me to be more spontaneous and react to the elements in the structure more immediately.

SM: Wicker baskets?! That alone is funny. So you're using containers that will not hold liquids. Yet paint...it really is a substance that's malleable and close to the materials we use in the kitchen: liquid, powder, binder, etc. There's always a goal or ambition of some sort in your work. This desire to connect with something or to serve a purpose is what I love about your performances, and the set or sculpture is a support for the actions—or is it the prize?

KG: When I was developing this piece, I was really determined to try a new material. I've been using ceramic pots quite a bit lately, and while I'm still in love with that material, I really wanted to use something new that still had the quality of a vessel. I started looking around, and then started to think about Easter baskets, which made me really laugh. How absurd, how un-arty...when the laughing subsided I started to think more seriously about them, and realized they were a great material to work with because they contain, yet don't. They have this domestic quality that is familiar, yet are quite useless in most circumstances. The materials and sculptures of all my pieces are there to support the action just as much as the action is there to support the materials.

SM: I know we've skimmed this issue before, but I'm still curious about who in your lineage, or which of your predecessors, you see as performers who do not indulge in narcissism on any level. It's quite extraordinary, really, to use your own body and yet not fall into the role of cult leader...to have such a healthy, strong ego and be so forceful without drawing attention to yourself! You act as a stand-in for a much larger experience...it's more complex than simply representing women. I know you've said that you actually like the cult thing in

other people's work. But you manage to raise the bar by displaying your body yet not demanding or controlling the viewer with that "leadership" thing. So who else has done this thing where the viewers get to pass through the actor into the character per se? Bette Davis is always Bette Davis, but she also becomes each character. Some actors always remain themselves. Do you care about transformation at all, or is this just an issue for theater?

KG: Oh, narcissism! It's something I'm very aware of in my work, and something I'm not interested in, though I do love a good diva, and we have many of them in our worlds. That said, I want to exist on an equal footing with the objects that are being made and unmade and use myself as a means of expressing formal issues related to art while also using the self to explore what it means to exist in this body, in this space, in this action. Ideally I like to disappear and reappear in my videos, similar to an undercoat of paint—I become a piece that comes in and out of focus, moving between object, character, and director.

SM: Your disappearance and reappearance is a kind of narrative line. It raises questions; your role changes in a seamless way so that the focus for a viewer can never be solely on Kate but on what we *all* do and how we *all* do it. The element of destruction in your work, the way you take things apart and leave the results, abandon the scene...this leaves us to wonder what happened and why. Do you gather your ideas for a new piece from witnessing "happenings" in the world? Are you thinking in terms of presenting a framed scene or event that reflects some encounter you've had out in the world, or are you working primarily from internal matters—memories, dreams, etc.? I wonder if narcissism and paranoia are intertwined



*Standing Here*, 2010, video still

in our American landscape somehow. The narcissist needs attention, and the paranoid may be isolated and imagine that those people "outside" are going to affect him or her. I guess I wonder how much you think about specific external events in the world, and if you ever draw directly from these. You certainly are alert to the larger culture and the climate we live in, so I'm curious as to what point in the process it leaks into the work.

KG: I gather my ideas from almost everything I encounter—this can be riding the subway, reading the newspaper, observing the intricacies of the art world, or simply watching my mother obsessively set a dining room table. I grew up outside of

Washington, D.C., so the political (in varied forms) is often in the forefront of my thinking. I've started to look at art, history, the world we function in, its politics, in a similar way that I look at Washington. Everything is based on some sort of hierarchical structure; most of it is completely fucked up. I think that I try to make sense of these strange social structures that exist, and attempt through skewed logic to perform within them to create something quite different and unexpected.