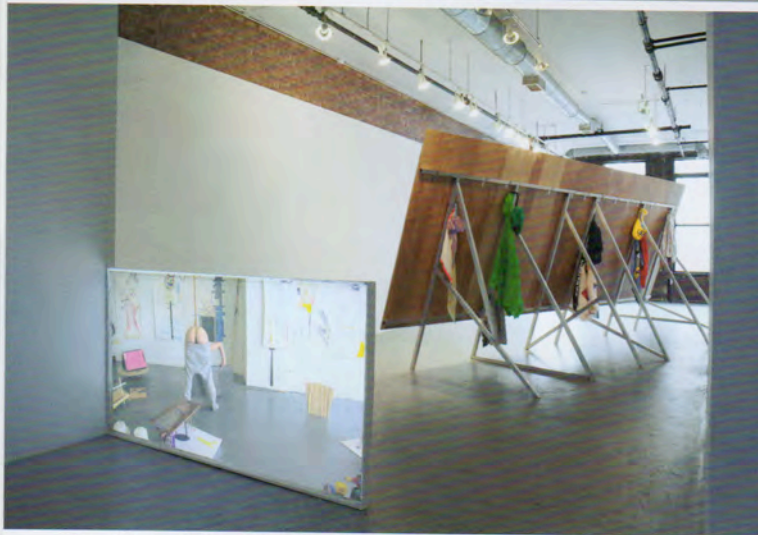


Dominique Nahas, “The Car Was His...”, dART International , Volume 16, #1



Top and above: installation view, Anna K.E., The car was his and story mine. Lucky Weekend, 2013, wood, tiles, aluminum, clothes, paper, 19' 8" x 8" x 5' 5" (599 x 244 x 165 cm). Above left: Gloss of a forehead, 2011, single-channel video, 9min 32 sec. Courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery

**The Car Was His...**  
**Anna K.E. at Simone Subal Gallery in New York**  
**by Dominique Nahas**

The car was his and story mine, Anna K.E.'s solo exhibition at the Simone Subal Gallery, includes the artist's 2011 video *Gloss of a Forehead* (2011) in which we see the artist arranging and

moving materials scattered in her studio, but doing so in a crab-like fashion, scuttling and scurrying around her work space with her naked butt raised in the air. This object perform-

ance dissolves into a mood that is haplessly funny and strangely moving. It equally intrigues and amazes with the full force of its sexual temerity and the strange innocence of its animalistic inferences. *Gloss of a Forehead* (and its subtitle "An undefined creature with a naked bottom entering the studio space starts to structure, clean, construct and install all kinds of objects (art pieces), eagerly following a serious inner demand") hints at the great amount of thought that K.E. gives to the role of desire as a drive and intuition in her work. The video sets the tone for the rest of the show. It points to K.E.'s obsession with the human body as a fragile container for elevated thoughts as well as for base desires. The video also teases out major themes that K.E. returns to over and over again: those of the contested "logic" of memory, conditions of alterity, and the recollection of sense impressions. K.E.'s themes are invigorated by playing off the dynamics of purity and impurity, (and their corollary: perfection and imperfection) throughout the work. It is not by accident, then, that the white mosaic tile found in restrooms and bathrooms is an important material that K.E. continually uses in her sculptural installations as she does in this exhibition. The hygienic white tile is a reference to digital tiling, a pixilation effect that serves as a signifier of collective homogeneity and conformity. In the Subal Gallery K.E.'s pristine and scrupulously constructed work *Lucky Weekend* (2013) dominates the gallery's floor space, cutting it in half. This surreal object serves as open closet/coat hanger space, a poster tableau, a tilted floor, a room divider, and billboard. *Lucky Weekend* consists of five interconnected panels covered with white bathroom tiles. Embedded within the glossy grid are colorful biomorphic ceramic forms that appear to float within the grid in a triangular pattern. While embedded within the intractable uniformity of quadrille space, the forms seem to joyfully defy the grid's constrictive linearity. The triangular

pattern reflects the pediment of an old bank house building situated directly opposite the gallery's windows and across the street. K.E.'s sculptures and drawings deal with space in a very particular way. Space, for the artist, is for production reflection, for storing ideational inventory of subject matters and sensations. It is supposed why in many of K.E.'s drawings (and in the past, her scale model-like sculptures that invoked Isa Genken's early architectural /constructivist impulses) the presence of built space pervades. So, too, does the inference that K.E., a former ballerina, is attentive to the choreography of body movements and its motions in space. As such, K.E.'s choreographic impulses are means through which somatic movement through physical space reflects ideational movements through mental space. Thus ideational movement attends to sense perceptions of objects that in turn release sense impressions that trigger or are triggered by voluntary and/or involuntary memory. K.E.'s imaginative universe consists of a strong push towards deconstruction and ephemerality that is countermanded by an equally insistent obsession with the plastic dimension and constructive realities that involves social space and its restrictions through architectural topoi. Anna K.E.'s *The car was his and the story mine*, brings up elements of seduction, role-playing narratives between male and female, the intersubjective play between the self and otherness and the spectrum of inhibitive realities that inhabit the subjectivity /objectivity matrix. These motifs waft throughout the exhibition, very much as ideational perfume. Anna K.E. draws the viewer into the gallery space through her ideational and spatial choreography. Her multi-dimensional and exquisitely calibrated exhibition *The car was his and story mine* at Simone Subal Gallery serves to nimbly connect previously unrelated dimensions of experience so as to produce unanticipated flashes of illumination within the viewer's mind.



Anna K.E., *No Diamonds in the Future*, 2012, mixed media on paper, 8" x 11" (21 x 28 cm).  
Courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery



Anna K.E., *Gloss of a forehead*, 2011, video still. Courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery