

# Time Out New York

**Mika Rottenberg, "Dough"**  
Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, through  
Sat 25 (see Chelsea)

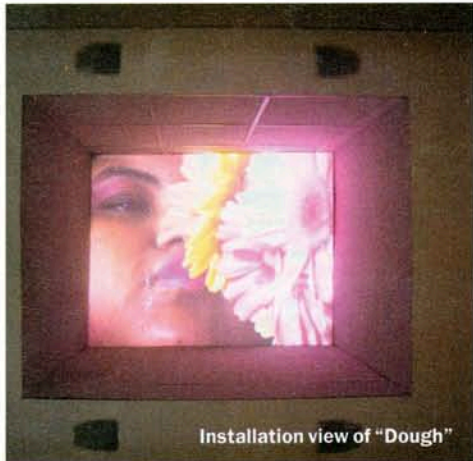
**M**ika Rottenberg's unsettling videos—eccentric characters manning absurdist assembly lines—have already earned the artist fans, thanks to standout pieces in group shows over the past year. For her first solo show in New York (one large-scale video installation and a selection of drawings), the young artist ups the ante on her signature format, drawing an unnerving analogy between dough and the human body.

The video is set in a claustropho-

bically small, distinctly low-tech dough-packaging factory, where decorative touches—bunches of flowers, piles of towels, spray bottles—also suggest a beauty salon. As it is massaged by women in tidy uniforms, the dough clearly stands in for flesh. But far from evoking the pampered form of a spa client, the dough assumes the shape of the workers' bodies: An obese woman at the head of the line kneads globs of the stuff, as voluminous as her own flesh, into a skinny rope that she then passes into the elongated hands of a tall, thin woman.

Rottenberg renders grotesque both dough and flesh, baking and beautification. But fantastical moments lighten the pervasive sense of disgust. In one scenario, a woman sniffs flowers to which she is allergic, and her falling tears keep the rising mixture moist. But it is the abject subject matter of the artist's drawings—which echo the video's references to beauty parlor workstations, but also feature projectile vomiting, vats of yellow liquid and swarms of disembodied, snapping jaws—that laces this auspicious and entertaining solo debut with menace.

—Merrily Kerr



Installation view of "Dough"