

WEEKEND Arts

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Elizabeth Dee Gallery

STANYA KAHN AND HARRIET (HARRY) DODGE Presented without fanfare on a small monitor as part of "Sugartown," an exhibition of 21 young and emerging artists from Los Angeles, the low-tech videos of Harriet (Harry) Dodge and Stanya Kahn might not seem like much at first. But stop and watch for a few minutes and you will be hooked by the funniest performance artist to appear in a New York art gallery since Alex Bag. In each of two 15-minute videos, Ms. Kahn, above, plays a hapless, badly dressed and coiffed character named Lois, who seems to be teetering on the brink of real insanity as a result of too much California-style hedonism and New Age philosophy. In "Let the Good Times Roll," she talks to an unseen cameraman named Dave (Ms. Dodge in reality) whom she met when they each mistakenly turned up

at the same desolate and windy spot in the desert looking for an outdoor rock concert. Back indoors, she proceeds to tell Dave in extraordinarily vivid detail a long, convoluted and hilarious story about a night of kinky sex, drug consumption, abjection and mystical enlightenment she had shortly after she heard of the death of Kurt Cobain. She speaks with such goofy, deadpan earnestness and verbal inventiveness that you wish she would go on for another hour. Somebody, please, give these women money to make a feature-length movie! ("Sugartown" remains on view at Elizabeth Dee Gallery, 545 West 20th Street, Chelsea, (212) 924-7545, through Aug. 6; and at Participant Inc., 95 Rivington Street, Lower East Side, (212) 254-4334, through Aug. 7.)

KEN JOHNSON