

of the body. Body functions, fluids, essences, and ownership were explored, analyzed, and evaluated. Whipple relies on the visual and tactile qualities of materials while Cannone uses text.

Cannone's *Footnote set #4* was placed inconspicuously in small type on the wall. It pairs two narratives, one about Dean Martin signing away over 100 percent of himself, and the other about a man whose prosthetic arm was seized as evidence because he was accused of using it as a weapon. Each of these accounts describes a situation in which the personal ownership of an individual's body or body part has been usurped. The works on the next wall, Cannone's *Footnote Set #9* on a T-shirt and Whipple's *Spurt (Arc)*, made reference to shit and piss respectively. Early in childhood we

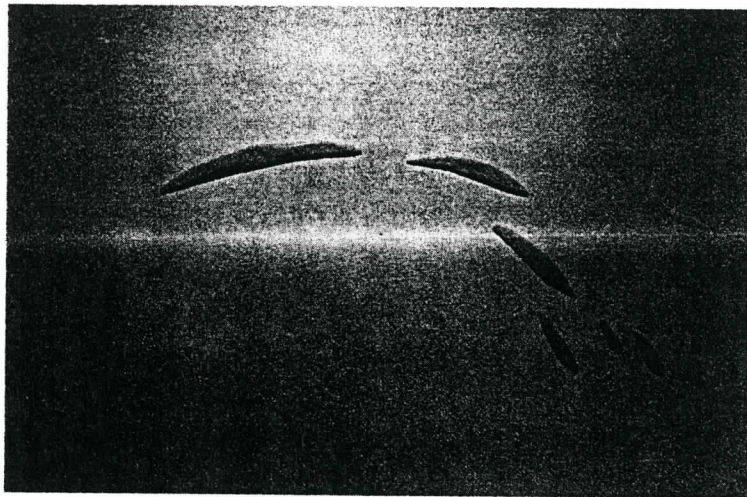
are taught that when these residues leave our bodies they are vile and no longer part of us. Both Whipple and Cannone humorously reclaim these body functions as acts of marking. Cannone's scatological text replicates graffiti about Nixon, and Whipple references a boy's game of testing the distance he can pee.

Other works refer to sickness, disease, death, and disembodiment. In *Single note for north wall*, Cannone's text describes how Tartar armies used the bodies of plague victims for biological warfare against their enemies. Paired with Whipple's *Quicksilver*, made of silver vinyl, the relationship between sickness, fevers, and mercury becomes clear. Death follows sickness and disease, and Cannone's *Library Card Proposal* transforms the regular book-borrowing privileges of an ordinary Chicago Public Library card into an organ-donor card. After death the body itself can be dismembered, or as suggested by Whipple's *Ghost*, it can become shiny white ectoplasm.

Although Whipple and Cannone use divergent media, their work converges in the desire to depict dismemberment and bodily decay. Whipple prefers to focus on the body's

undesirable physical remnants, reducing them to cartoony stylizations; Cannone relies on the literary codification of knowledge and the erasure of the physical body through the minutia of laws and institutions that control our very beings.

NADINE WASSERMAN



SARAH WHIPPLE
Spurt (Arc), 1996. Vinyl and batting.

ILLINOIS

DOLL HOUSE

UNIVERSITY GALLERIES
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
110 CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS
NORMAL, 61790, 309/438-5487

Walking into "Doll House" through Cec Hardacker's untitled painted-plywood façade was not so much like walking through a looking-glass as it was like seeing the tain (the silver backing) of a mirror. A rigorous reading would assess each component of this group show before deciding just what, as a whole, it suggested about "the role of childhood memory and socially imprinted concepts of the feminine" (as the show described itself). In the space of this review I can only say that the exhibition's matrix was, for me, Kim Knowles's four-room sequence *Match Box Pipe Breath*. That may be because I saw the show on a Tuesday night, though,

when, as she did every Tuesday for the duration of "Doll House," Knowles inhabited a box that occupied the second room in her series (the other three rooms each housed a video clip).

Only Knowles's hands (nails painted) and feet (in nylons and heels) jutted from holes in the long box, which resembled a garish magician's prop, or maybe a coffin. Those two superimposed connotations were further complicated by a small yellow door, with a tiny door-knob, set into the top of the box near her head. One sensed from the general tactility of the exhibition (pushing Aimee Morgana's buttons, sitting on Mandy Morrison's carpet scraps, clicking Laurie Anderson's mouse, etc.) that opening this door would be permitted; still, given the

box's connotations, I could not shake the sense that opening it would be like sawing a woman in half and attending a wake all at once. Deciding whether or not to open Knowles's door was like standing on a semantic see-saw, seeing becoming sawing in an illusion without a magician.

Any decision I might make about the show in general would have to take into account how *Box* complicated the very act of decision-making by dramatizing the overdetermination of perception. Indeed, of the various work by the 18 artists selected for this show, the most dramatic (i.e., in which meaning unfolded over time) was also the most successful. Between Morgana's electrified boxes, Morrison's camp video fantasia *Flower*, Anderson's interactive CD-ROM *Puppet Motel*, Jeanne Dunning's video *Icing*, and Knowles's rooms, curator Barry Blinderman made it clear that intervening in the circulation of representations that maintains social norms is quite literally a time-consuming project which needs a technical infrastructure, not just for arresting attention, but for holding it.

KEVIN MARZAHLS