

ARTFORUM

absurdist—formal resolution and the secondary, ironic suggestion of an obscure functional afterlife.

First up was *Listening Center* (all works 2007), a tall bundle of copper wires forced through a small hole in the center of a chunky plastic table. Wound together into a cable and splayed at both ends like a flower arrangement, the wires are capped with green-and-purple rubber earplugs that accentuate the work's faux-organic look. Like a makeshift approximation of an alien perennial harvested from the set of *Star Trek*, *Listening Center* seems to tease us with the inevitable failure of attempts to imagine the unimaginable, to hear the sound of silence. Its components retain their original identities such that suspension of disbelief becomes impossible, leaving us with a feeling of sheepish embarrassment at our ideational limitations.

If *This Ability* resembles anything, it might be an oversize maquette salvaged from Anthony Caro or Gary Webb's studio trash. An L-shaped length of weathered, scarlet-painted steel piping with a toilet-seat-like form at one end and a tennis-ball-size sphere slathered with blood-colored lubricant at the other sits in a yellow plastic furniture-moving bag pooled unceremoniously on the gallery floor. Like many of Knight's jerry-rigged structures, it has a visceral, even mildly obscene feel that evokes the roughly abstracted erotics of Sarah Lucas's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 2000, or Jake and Dinos Chapman's *Little Death Machine (Castrated)*, 1993.

Mouth to Mouth is more pared back, though similarly uncomfortable in its suggestion of intimate awkwardnesses. Two slender bars of polished steel, the shorter one curving from a blocky steel base, are linked by a clear plastic CPR mouth shield (a curious and slightly unpleasant object in its own right) attached to a condomlike funnel of pink latex. This component also serves to lift one end of the shorter bar above the floor in a way that seems, at first glance, almost gravity-defying. The possibility of imminent collapse is tangible, the contrast between materials adding to the sense that incompatible elements have been forced into potentially volatile proximity.

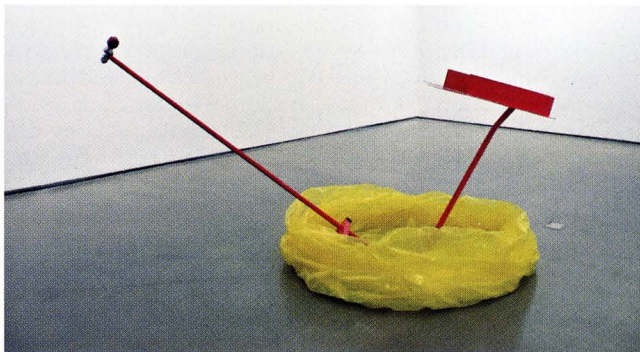
The centerpiece of the show was the neatly titled *Arrangement in Black and Blue*, a spindly assemblage that looks as though it might be spring-loaded, ready to trip, bag, and tag the unwary viewer; a large sack is chained to a small stack of weights and connected to an ironing-board-like structure of weathered wood, framed in black steel, by a long pole. But the work's implied chain of physical cause and effect falls deliberately short, lacking the operational logic one might have expected. Lurking around the corner in Team's second gallery, *Void Fill* was the ultimate summation of the show's dark humor. A tall, open cardboard box apparently designed to hold a corpse destined for cremation, it has a hole in its center through which a partially inflated clear plastic air bag has been pulled (a neat echo of *Listening Center*, at the opposite end of the space). It's a brutally simple combination of objects that blows the viewer a final (extremely final) virtual raspberry.

—Michael Wilson

Ross Knight

TEAM GALLERY

Ross Knight's fifth solo exhibition at Team Gallery was a judiciously sparse arrangement of five new constructions characterized in the press release as "pratfall sculptures." It's an apt term for these playfully precarious works; there's something of the concealed rake, balanced water bucket, or discarded banana skin about all of them. Like Andreas Slominski's elaborate improvised animal traps, Knight's knowingly awkward setups seem to lie in wait, appearing physically and conceptually suspended, caught between quantifiable—albeit



Ross Knight,
This Ability, 2007,
steel, paint, patina,
plastic bag, lubricant,
36 x 73 x 38".