

Parker's Box 193 Grand Street Brooklyn NY 11211

**Parker's Box is extremely happy to announce a solo exhibition by:**

*Caroline McCarthy*

**Opening Reception, Friday February 15, 6-9 pm**

Exhibition dates: February 16 – March 18, 2002

Gallery hours: Friday to Monday 1 to 7 pm

Caroline McCarthy is a young Irish artist whose work has already attracted considerable attention for its innovative exploration of situations and things generally so familiar that they go unnoticed. Among the earliest works that brought her recognition were a number of video pieces like "Found Spirit" (1996) in which a sweatshirt flapping in the wind on a clothesline is brought to life by being filmed upside down, its arms gesticulating expressively. Another video, "Greetings" (1996) was recently seen across the USA in the touring exhibition "Irish Art Now", and is now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in Dublin.

In her recent works, McCarthy focuses on our perception of familiar objects and what happens when we are given reasons to look at them more closely, and with fresh eyes. In this way, banal plastic or cardboard containers might have their external aspect (and never their form), subtly changed so that they appear to be cameras or electronic equipment. It is here that it becomes clear that there exists an uncanny common denominator between the high and low ends of mass-produced object design. Her new work *From the Testors Military Range...* has been specially produced in Brooklyn for the exhibition, using containers, packaging and paint from the USA. The title refers to the extremely specific range of paints available for modelmakers from the Testors Corporation (a generous sponsor of the current project). The exhibition will include this and other works that are a transformation of quotidian objects, investing them with new and unexpected identities.

In such works, McCarthy is also interested in the subtle differences apparent in products available in different cultural contexts. Her raw materials have included the extraordinary range of different colored toilet paper available only in Great Britain (!), or the carefully designed plastic containers used for liquids, detergents and other products. Such objects have subtle but significant differences in each cultural context and consumer market. By carefully transforming them, McCarthy increases their visibility, but her statement that it is "too easy to make something look like something else", is significant here. Caroline McCarthy's real interest lies much more in "making something hover between what it was and what it is alluding to being..." By doing this, the artist manages to gently lure the spectator through a narrow door into a space where we are able to reassess the identity of the highly designed things that populate our lives, from the most streamlined electronics to the sleekest bottles of detergent. Perhaps we have been blinded to the beauty of these objects that designers have labored to conceive, and perhaps McCarthy seeks to restore it, while at the same time exposing the shallowness of appearances.