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An illustration of four women in beauty pageant costumes. They are wearing white dresses and yellow sashes with black text. From left to right, the sashes say 'CALIFORNIA', 'MISS', 'NEW YORK', and 'FLORIDA'. The women have various hairstyles and expressions, including wide smiles and a more serious look. The background is dark with some light-colored circles.

CLAUDE WAMPLER

The four small vitrines that sit atop pedestals near the entrance to the gallery seem to contain grisly bits of sculpture, bloodied scraps of hair and bone. But when you approach, you're met with a nasty surprise: motion detectors trigger the vitrines to turn an opaque gray, denying you more than a fleeting glimpse of the work. An explanation of sorts comes courtesy of a large gray panel, framed in silver and gracing one wall, that unclouds when approached to reveal a floating female figure—body bound, teeth bloodied. At first the figure seems mechanized, straight from a carnival house of horrors, but in fact it's the artist, performing all day, every day. Original, strange, and beautiful. Through Oct. 7. (Postmasters, 459 W. 19th St. 727-3323.)

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