

work perfect if he wanted; he obviously prefers cracks and slop. Any attempt to make the works seamless would tip the scales; Nudd's forms would become nameable monsters, demons or substances. Too much attention to shading, modeling or skin tones and the forms would register as unacceptable variance, and simply repel. The work needs to touch on taxonomies in a comic and careless way, to force you into a position where you might reject the aesthetic outright. That is when the forms function as the dumb, dirty and disrespectful offspring of mainstream culture's common decorum and American standards of material worth. Instead, this material is exactly what it is, cheap, and the form supremely what we cannot allow it to be, worldly.

Both **Paul Nudd** and **Casey Ann Wasniewski** are artists working in the Chicagoland area. Nudd received an MFA from University of Illinois at Chicago and a BFA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He exhibits regularly at Western Exhibitions and has been included in solo and group shows throughout the Midwest since 2001. Wasniewski received an MFA (2005) and a BFA (2003) from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has been exhibited at the Lancaster Art Museum (PA), Atlantic Center for the Arts (FL), and she was one of the selected artists to participate in The Artist Project at Art Chicago 2008.

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### Related Events:

#### Exhibition Reception

Sunday, May 11, 3 - 5 pm

#### Art Thing:

Tuesday, July 1, 4-5 pm

Wasniewski will speak about her work and answer questions.

All events are free and open to the public.

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## Hyde Park**ART**CENTER

5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 [www.hydeparkart.org](http://www.hydeparkart.org)

The Hyde Park Art Center is a not-for-profit organization that presents innovative exhibitions, primarily work by Chicago-area artists, and educational programs in the visual arts for children and adults of diverse backgrounds. The Center is funded in part by the Alphawood Foundation; The Chicago Community Trust; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council; The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Leo S. Guthman Fund; The Irving Harris Foundation; The Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Joyce Foundation; JPMorgan Chase Foundation; The Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; The MacArthur Foundation; The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; The Orbit Fund; Polk Bros. Foundation; The Clinton Family Fund; The Sara Lee Foundation; South East Chicago Commission; The Wallace Foundation; and the generosity of its members and friends.

## Hyde Park**ART**CENTER Cleve Carney Gallery

May 4 - July 20, 2008

# Dirty:

Work by  
Paul Nudd  
and  
Casey Ann Wasniewski



If you have ever had your mouth washed out with soap as punishment for saying something dirty, then this show is for you. The word “dirty” serves as a perfect title for the exhibition of works by Paul Nudd and Casey Ann Wasniewski because, like the penalty mentioned prior, the word can signify something comical that relates to the body and evokes discomfort in both the physical and psychological sense. When used as a noun, dirt is something natural: soil from the earth. As an adjective, it is used to identify something unhygienic or a concept or language that is so crude we are embarrassed by it. A dirty joke or “talking dirty” usually includes some comment on the sexualized body causing us to blush. Our puritanical roots deemed the body unclean a long time ago, so it is not surprising that the human figure and landscape are often combined creating imagery that has been present in art since cave paintings.

*Dirty* is a two-person exhibition of new paintings by Paul Nudd and soft sculptures by Casey Ann Wasniewski examining the uncanny similarities between geology and biology. Looking at the layered textures, rich earthy colors and sheer accumulation of materials in the works by these artists, we are reminded of a primordial time before any such body as we know it existed. What if we could wipe the slate clean of religion and science and just “be” with nature’s raw material? What would we learn? What could come out of it? Mining the murky ambiguous matter where all three elements – animal, vegetable, mineral – meet provides fertile ground to cultivate imagery that is simultaneously subterranean and from within the human cavity. Both artists encourage scientific fantasy in these objects, and this time, no one is threatening a mouth-washing, so be as dirty as you want to be.



Casey Ann Wasniewski, *Stout Cudge*, 2006, wool and horse hair, 21 X 14 X 14 1/2 inches

Allison Peters  
Director of Exhibitions, HPAC

### Casey Wasniewski

*Brobdingnagian Caliginous Substratum Scarum, Flocculent Bestial Chutzpa, and Sinewy Cerulean* are just some of the titles Wasniewski has given to her woolly creations. It is almost as if words were typed into a thesaurus or a translation program and it went haywire, spitting out pseudo-scientific jargon turned into poetry. Do not be fooled by the nonsensical sounding names, the words are very intentional, and the artist even provides a reference list of definitions (available at the front desk), for the curious-minded. The titles provide an immediate clue that the work is intentionally situated between natural science, geology, mythology, and fantasy.

According to Wasniewski, “Sometimes we think we know something, but we only know it in the most abstract way, which means we may not know it at all. I am interested in making objects that can be seen to have an immediate association with out bodies in nature. I would like to elicit contradictory feelings of repulsion, familiarity, and attraction...The sculptures are an accumulation of the unknown, a world far beneath the peripheral view we have become accustom to. They can be seen as a conglomeration of the dirtiness hiding within everyday life and the abstract beauty lurking far beneath the ocean’s surface, forest’s bottom, or the outer layers of the human skin.”

Displayed like artifacts, these sculptures rarely reveal their structure or process in order to keep up the charade of spontaneous evolution. Each piece is hand-stitched using the French knot and wool yarn. Wasniewski first sews the yarn onto a panel

of industrial felt and then builds up the surface knot after knot causing swells, pouches and crevices to form and shape the object. The most recent and largest piece in the exhibition, *Brobdingnagian Caliginous Substratum Scarum*, is the only work in the show that reveals this underbelly of material. The rest of the objects hide their insides and appear completely solid although they are hollow and made without any type of structure other than the felt base. Interjecting patches of goat fur and sprigs of horse hair into the dots, bumps and bends of each boulder-like shape gives the surface of the artwork a fleshy quality. According to the artist, the transformation from a clean, rational understanding to one that is visceral is central to the understanding of her work.

### Paul Nudd

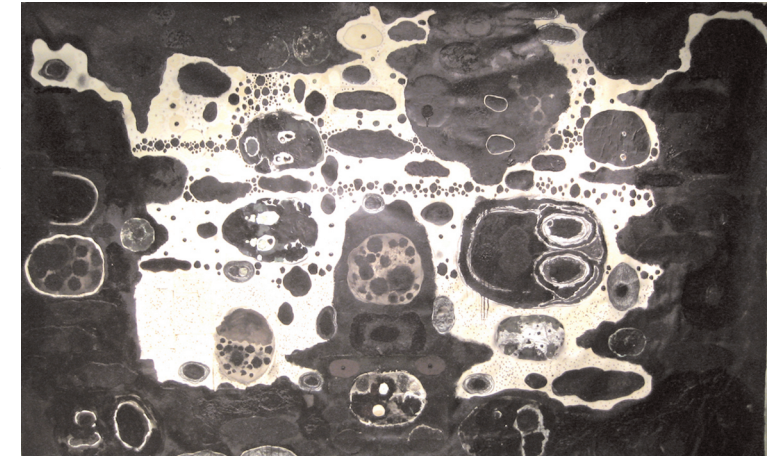
This text is an excerpt from *Lesion: Or, how I learned to stop worrying and love America's gross national product* by Anthony Elms:

Any encounter with Paul Nudd’s art leaves me feeling slightly slimy, slightly tawdry—this feeling goes for encounters with Nudd the man as well. There is no other way. Nudd takes pleasure in descriptions and representations beyond the pale of good, descent table conversation. I missed a talk

he gave at VONZWECK on August 23, 2007, but a couple attendees assure me it was the dirtiest talk they’d ever attended. Not Penthouse Forum dirty, rather dirty as in a feeling of having partaken in something wrong and having been besmirched for this wrong. Nudd makes work that traffics in hallmarks of abjection: refuse and bodily remainders, excretions and formlessness, confused taxonomies and impure body protrusions. But as tempting as it is to label Nudd’s work abject, when seriously considering his output, this designation feels too serious, with the overtones of writers such as Georges Bataille, Sigmund Freud and Julia Kristeva. There is too much humor in Nudd’s work. Forget abjection, if Paul’s paintings, videos and collages traffic in anything, it is in ill-formed Muppet larvae with eczema. If you need proof, look to his titles: *Soggy Donkey, Kluster Crusts, Slug Lust, Green Stews or Green Milk, Wurmburths*, etc.

...The bubbling forms and violence of the imagery is never truly life-like, that is the levity which makes them so endearing and engrossing. And this is the similarity between Paul’s art and films like *Evil Dead*. Halfway through *Evil Dead* when a demon hand thrusts forward to drive a pencil into the ankle of one of the heroines, it is the too-bright light, the unmoving rubber claws, the obviously fake modeled leg, the stop-action painting of demon infection web spreading across flesh that makes the scene so terrifying, disgusting and squirm inducing. The scene scares because you want to laugh. Likewise, getting lost in the small details, the delicate clumps, the careful coloration on the crust and obsessive lines and hairy patches in Nudd’s paintings and collages. The work induces giggles because you want to be disgusted. There is a difference between a desire for simple disgust and shock through a gross out, and revealing what is judged wrong in American society’s mores though caricatured nausea. Realism would ruin any effect.

...You don’t need to believe the clumps, just react. Bare-bones frothy transformation, and the surprise it enables, is the name of this game. Nudd could make the



Paul Nudd, *black sub-dung slug*, 2007 - 2008, mixed media collage on canvas, 72 x 110 inches