



**Elizabeth Insogna**, Contributor

Art for the divine feminine

# Hello Nasty

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Nasty by definition indicates something unpleasant, nauseating, repugnant to the mind, and/or morally bad. Nasty can also indicate something physically or mentally damaging or harmful.

Nasty in reference or in association with art may be something else entirely. It may represent the element in your life that aims to incorporate a more difficult aspect of (experience, perspective, feeling) rather than repress it, open up and question rather than close up and shut down, sweep under the rug and stuff back down the throat. Nasty wants to have a conversation and it wants it now. It's the confrontation you don't want to have and the provocation you wished didn't get under your skin. It's the touch you can't take back. It's the dirty little secret your analyst has been uncovering for years. Sooner or later you're going to have to face it. Perhaps today's the day.

Yet.

To take nasty at face value is to be insensitive to other parts of experience it highlights in the process of being present.

*Hello Nasty*, a group show curated by Chris Bors, which takes its name from the fifth studio album by the Beastie Boys, is up at Cindy Rucker Gallery till August 9th. It's working to

unfasten the broader dialogue and and features Chris Bors, Paul Brainard, Dawn Frasch, Aaron Johnson, Hein Koh, Tom Sanford, and Aaron Zimmerman.

The show is quite beautiful with some incredible contributions. Surprising is the sensitive side that is revealed, the up side of Nasty. It would seem that more than one of the artist's processes channel what could be called a rebellion against an ancient emotional spirit, one that haunts the nether regions of what was once a psychic depository, the vessel of collection if you will of "reaction" to certain systems of authority. For some, the spirit of rebellion is against the traces of the impression that puritanical America left on us - for another the spirit of rebellion stares face to face against the idea, construction and action of patriarchy. Still another may harbor feelings against any number of violations, personal or public, whether it be of intimacy or ambition, apathy or futility.

We see the signs. Blessed Art Thou Among Women. We see crucifixes enveloping in and emerging out of the very beautiful vaginas imaged in *Crucifix Sandwich* by Dawn Frasch.



Dawn Frasch, *Crucifix Sandwich*, 2013, 12 x 16", Watercolor on Arches Hot Press, courtesy of the artist

It is important to note that Dawn Frasch is known for her large masterly oil paintings whose grand presence and deep emotionality is felt in the entranceway of a room. The works chosen for this show (from 2009 to present) were of the smaller more

delicate variety on paper (though close up have the same power as their larger sisters). The paper material adds to the feeling of delicacy and the watercolor works us over in vulnerability as we stare, for one, into the glorious and gorgeously painted fecund regions of a rat. Is that so nasty? Maybe. There's more. The vagina is an important and magical area in the paintings of Frasch. It's a place that indicates duality bordering on multiplicity. We may think of past female artists that have also focused there — Carolee Schneemann, Kiki Smith and Heide Hatry to name a few.

It may be beneficial to think of the vagina as one possible physical psychic depository - one that does not forget - her emotional memory is also ancient — things in history may have been swallowed up vagina dentata style and letting them out again may induce a transformation - a metamorphosis of psychic material — For good or bad we know not.

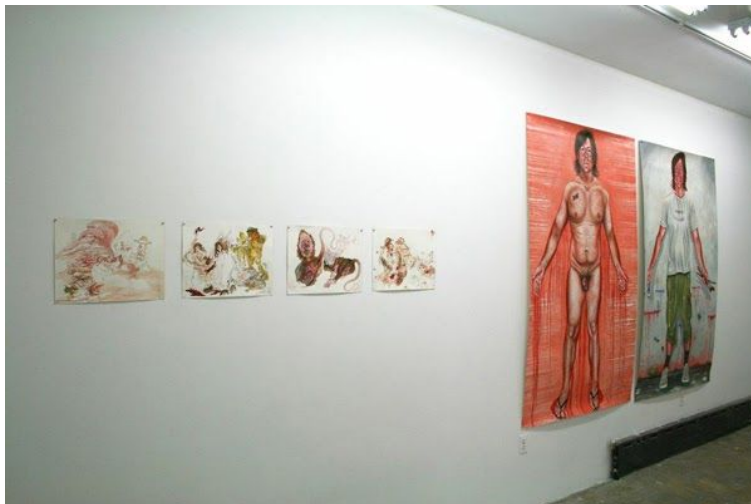


Dawn Frasch, *The Thrill of the Hunt*, 2012, 12 x 16", Watercolor on Arches Hot Press,  
Courtesy of the Artist



Dawn Frasch, *Immaculate Rat Corpse*, 2013, 12 x 16", Watercolor on Arches Hot Press, courtesy of the artist

Directly along the horizon line to the right of Frasch's works are the genitals (uncovered and covered) of Tom Sanford's large and beautifully painted men (man) (self-portrait). I'm convinced there is meaning here even if the placement was done on an unconscious level. Is this choice nasty?



Installation Image, *Hello Nasty*, Dawn Frasch, Tom Sanford, Courtesy of Chris Bors and Cindy Rucker Gallery

“For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face, now I know in part;  
but then I shall know even as I am also known.”



Tom Sanford, *Two Tom Sanfords from Observation Approximately to Scale*, 2008, oil on paper, 72” x 96”, courtesy of the artist

In a time of sexual fluidity and our collectively transgendered spirit it’s interesting to note that the works chosen from both of the female artists in the show were of the softer and more delicate variety than is typical of both of their oeuvres.

To be sure, Hein Koh’s newer work in general seems softer at the moment than in previous years. Looking at Koh’s sculpture, “After Birth”, after moving past the signifiers in Art of infinity nets, fragility, and repeated phallic forms we may move to an older burial ground and see the head of Medusa or the worms that do their work after death, working with the grosser forms of transformation. This points to the process of creation in general which is seldom pretty or calm. It is important to note that although this work incites the messy process after a birth (metaphorical in this case) the vessel that holds that which is breaking through has a form that takes on characteristics that appear to be brain like.





Hein Koh, *“After Birth“*, acrylic, armature wire, chicken wire, dry pigment, Magic-Sculpt, pantyhose, plaster gauze, and polyfil, approximately 40”H x 40”W x 34”D, 2013, Courtesy of the artist.

Paul Brainard’s work is imbued with dark mystery. The characters exist in a world of their own in portrait bubbles and stars — a purgatory of their own making with no exit. Darkly and dauntingly we may want to follow the characters’ future lives Bladrunner style all the way to the cliff end. The appeal is in the superficial, the cool shades, hot flesh, and flash ad campaigns. It’s the little boy in all of us that navigates the world from inside his pants and wakes up with an explosion of the illusion of fantasy — or the other way around.



Paul Brainard, *American Corporate Propaganda Drone*, 2013, pen and pencil on paper, 38 1/2 x 73 inches, courtesy of the artist



Installation Image, *Hello Nasty*, Chris Bors, Hein Koh, Courtesy of Chris Bors and Cindy Rucker Gallery



Installation Image, *Hello Nasty*, Aaron Johnson, Dawn Frasch, Tom Sanford, Courtesy of Chris Bors and Cindy Rucker Gallery

And don't forget to look for Aaron Johnson's work in the back room of the gallery.

*Hello Nasty* is open through August 9th 2013 at Cindy Rucker Gallery. Please see website for more information.

<http://cindyruckergallery.com/>

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