

WEXLER GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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WILD NATURE

Christy Langer, Julie Anne Mann, Andy Paiko, & Jennifer Trask



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May 4 - June 30, 2012

PHILADELPHIA- In the main gallery space, Wexler Gallery is proud to present **WILD Nature**, a group show exploring themes relating to the natural world, the human condition, and the idea of the sublime. Featured artists will include **Christy Langer, Julie Anne Mann, Andy Paiko, and Jennifer Trask**. Curated by Wexler Gallery Director Sienna Freeman. The exhibition will run from May 4 - June 30, 2012. An opening reception will take place on First Friday, May 4th from 5 – 8pm.

WILD Nature will investigate the awe-inspiring and sometimes terrifying qualities of nature, a topic widely explored by artists and writers during the Romantic period in Europe. Using a variety of mediums and techniques, featured artists will explore the exotic worlds of flora and fauna from an allegorical approach, often drawing from personal experiences, memories, and dreams. The show will also consider connections between the human subconscious and the wilderness of the physical world.

Canadian artist **Christy Langer** works with animal imagery to “illustrate the disparity between reality and remembered experience.” Best known for her hauntingly life-like and emotional sculptures of various creatures, the artist explores boundaries between reality and falsity, beauty and the grotesque. Langer’s mixed media sculptures are made using materials such as porcelain, resin, epoxy, and paint. The artist has also recently begun a series of drawings on stretched animal skin, which will debut during the exhibition.

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Langer earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the Ontario College of Art and Design. Her work has exhibited at galleries and art fairs across the US and Canada. Langer has also been the two time recipient of both the Ontario Arts Council Visual Arts Emerging Artist Grant and Toronto Arts Council Visual Arts Emerging Artist Grant. She presently lives and works in Toronto, Canada.

Born and raised on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State, **Julie Anne Mann** grew up in a secluded, heavily forested region where nature was a focal point in the artist's early life. Seeking to "develop and refine a perception that explores the link between man and nature," Mann creates both two and three dimensional pieces that investigate the darker side of the natural world and its connection to human nature. In her *Forest Portrait* series, Mann uses silver leaf to draw anthropomorphic tree forms on the surface of large cross-sections of burl wood. Much like traditional portraiture, these images capture a moment in time that reveals each subject's unique character, while "suggesting an individual and collective narrative for the viewer to unravel."

Mann earned a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York NY. Her work has been exhibited both locally and internationally in New York, Los Angeles, Puerto Rico and Mexico. She has also received a number of awards including a grant from New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. The artist currently lives and works in upstate New York.

Andy Paiko is a glass blower who is interested in making functional objects that both communicate and imitate purpose. Well known for his antiquarian style glass bell jars containing found natural objects and obscure artifacts, his pieces investigate a symbolic way of dealing with the form/function relationship. According to the artist, "each piece could be metaphorical; it could comment on the difficulty of decision making in everyday life, the relationship of society with nature or language, or the way the mind grasps experience through dreams."

Paiko received his undergraduate degree in Studio Art from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California in 2002. Since then, he has worked as an independent studio glass artist and also co-founded the Central Coast Glass gallery and workshop in Florence, Oregon. Paiko was named Searchlight Artist by the American Craft Council in 2008 and has recently been selected for the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Renwick Gallery's 2012 exhibition *40 under 40: Craft Futures*. He currently lives and works in Portland, Oregon.

Jennifer Trask creates complex wall hung and wearable pieces tediously assembled from bones, animal remains, found objects, and precious metals and stones. Her most recent body of work, *Vestige*, presents objects that are "intended to mirror our complex relationship to our own internal nature(s), and the peculiar concept of dominion over intrinsic nature, or wildness by engineering a domesticated, ornamental nature." Derived from the artist's examination of the structures of plant and animal life, her imagery often references microscopic patterns of growth found in nature while exploring ideas about cultivation and ornamentation.

Trask earned a BFA in Metalsmithing from Massachusetts College of Art and an MFA from the State University of NY at New Paltz. Her work has exhibited world wide and can be found in many public collections, including the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY; Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, AR; and the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, New Paltz, NY. The artist was also awarded the Peter S. Reed Foundation Grant in 2008. She presently lives and works in upstate New York.

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Fascinated by the notion of challenging traditional labels that categorize art, Wexler Gallery exhibits work that can coexist in the worlds of design, fine art, decorative art and craft. By questioning and challenging the boundaries of these fields, we aim to present functional and non-functional work that consistently celebrates innovation. Unified by a commitment to excellent craftsmanship and true dedication to their art, we are proud to showcase some of the world's most esteemed artists working in their areas of pursuit.

The Wexler Gallery is located at 201 North Third Street in the historical district of Old City Philadelphia. We invite you to visit our gallery or explore our website at www.wexlergallery.com. For high resolution images or additional information, please contact Sienna@wexlergallery.com or call (215) 923-7030.

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Christy Langer
Sevens, 2008
Resin and oil paint
10.5 x 39 x 14.5"

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Julie Anne Mann
The Lovers, 2010
walnut burl, silver leaf
48 x 72 inches

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Andy Paiko

Reliquaries

Blown glass, gold plated internal objects
Varied dimensions

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Jennifer Trask
Tulipa
Carved Antler bone
Life sized