

# ARTFORUM

## Toronto

Rhonda Wepler and Trevor Mahovsky

PARI NADIMI GALLERY

254 Niagara Street

October 20, 2007–January 11, 2008



*Perch*, 2007, Hydrocal on metal and foam armature with enamel paint, 10' x 4' 6" x 4'.

Installed as an evenly distributed, sprawling configuration on the weathered floor of this gallery, Vancouver-based artists Rhonda Wepler and Trevor Mahovsky's "Clutter Sculptures" depict clusters of everyday objects—derived mainly from the studio, the home, and the hardware store—in a manner that often yields a startling expressive complexity, given their lack of descriptive details and their limited range of commercial colors. These objects are metal and foam armatures approximating the shapes of mundane things—such as paint cans—which the artists have covered with thick layers of plaster, followed by obfuscating coats of industrial enamel, in either a glossy or a matte finish.

While some smaller works playfully critique modernist still-life traditions, the mood becomes tense and uneasy in the face of the more substantial *Tipped Stack with Clinging Jug and Hammer* (all works 2007), which features a precariously balanced assemblage of boxes that have received a seemingly hasty slathering of utterly mundane beige and white; this thick coating has left residual, repulsive globules and drips. On either side of the stack—topped by the jug and the hammer in a manner recalling Picasso's synthetic Cubist sculptures—the artists have added only a lopsided orange smile, which seems like a sly bit of vandalism, set against the mostly monochrome surfaces. A highlight of the show, *Perch*, consists of a curving orange rod, with a black ring hanging from it, emerging from a bed of rubble composed of multicolored flowers, rust-hued bricks, and bottles rendered in forest green and fecal brown. A bit of material that extends from the rod's tip suggests the blade of an ax; a flag that might have memorial significance, given the surrounding ruin; and the residue from the stirring of an enormous Oldenburgian cocktail. This unexpected symbolic diversity, revealed only through extended viewing, makes Wepler and Mahovsky's project a worthwhile and provocative experience.

— Dan Adler