



Adams and Ollman

Paul Swenbeck: *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*

August 5–September 16, 2023

For inquiries:

Amy Adams
amy@adamsandollman.com
+1 215 426 4244

Andrea Glaser
aglaser@adamsandollman.com
+1 503 569 4050

Adams and Ollman is excited to present *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, a new sculptural and sensory installation by Paul Swenbeck (b. 1967, Salem, MA; lives and works in Philadelphia, PA and Boston, MA). Working in ceramics, textiles, sound and light, and drawing from a rich do-it-yourself tradition that prioritizes immediacy, intimacy, play, Swenbeck fashions worlds that are both earthbound and fantastical, transporting the viewer to otherworldly landscapes. In *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, Swenbeck's latest installation, we are invited to follow an arcane narrative filled with occult and spiritual themes often to a surreal conclusion. The exhibition will open with a reception on August 5 and be on view through September 16, 2023.

For nearly 30 years, Swenbeck has been developing a lexicon of material techniques, forms, and symbols that operate with staggering fluency and precision. Indebted to the allegorical works of Hieronymus Bosch and the mystical paintings of Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, among others, Swenbeck also draws inspiration from Jungian dream psychology, Wilhelm Reich's theories of primordial cosmic energy, the natural landscape, and science fiction, employing highly abstract symbolism that intersects with formal concerns and material play. An early formative experience working at the Witch Dungeon Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, had a significant impact on his macabre aesthetic tendencies, theatricality, and interest in the possibility of older, perhaps forgotten or mythologized systems of knowledge.

For *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, Swenbeck turns the gallery into a dream-like netherspace. The title of the exhibition references the pagan acknowledgement of the middle point between seasons, believed to be a time when the veil between material and metaphysical reality has dissolved, and magical communion is possible. In the installation, Swenbeck invites viewers to cross through a sculptural portal in order to suspend their disbelief.

While inspired by the artist's travels to Muktinath, Nepal, the threshold here is provisional, fashioned from recycled plastic and discarded wood beams. Beyond this transition to the other world lies a vignette with an animistic landscape populated by a chorus of symbolic creatures—a mouse, a cat, an owl—that occupy this parallel dimension with its own logic, meaning and intention.

Throughout the exhibition, themes of transformation and rebirth pervade, with the specter of death always in proximity. In *The Silvered Maw*, a swampy garden marsh is the surreal setting for a deathbed scene where a giant flower lies ill. The avatar of the flower as both subject and object of condolence draws attention to the relationality between death and its signifiers. *Hallucigenia's Dream* takes the theme of transformation to a more extreme end, delighting in the interplay between the familiar and alien. Using imagery culled from years of dream journals, and inspired by the *Hallucigenia*, a strange worm-like creature initially discovered as a fossil in the Burgess Shale deposits, this tableau vivant references the metamorphosis of grub to chrysalis to moth in a fantasy that is played out amongst a cohort of creatures that become lost in reverie and transmute in wild and unnerving ways. Ambient throughout the presentation is a new audio work by Guest Host that features a call and response of electronic voices, and references spell-casting and echolocation, human-environmental interaction, and the ambivalence of causality.

Paul Swenbeck (b.1967, Salem, MA; lives and works in Philadelphia, PA and Boston, MA) received his BFA from Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA. His work has been exhibited at John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, WI; the Institute of Contemporary Art, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Temple Gallery, Tyler School of Art, all Philadelphia, PA; The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Massachusetts

College of Art and Design, Boston, MA; and Maine Contemporary Art, Rockland, ME. Swenbeck also has a long history of working with artist-run spaces including Vox Populi, The Project Room, Basekamp, Space IO26, all Philadelphia, PA; and Lump Projects, Raleigh, NC. Swenbeck currently teaches experimental clay at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. In 2013, the artist was awarded a Pew Fellowship in the Arts.



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Tukulche Gate, 2023
wood, plastic, soda fired stoneware,
brass, mistletoe, pipe cleaner
117h x 140w x 78d in
297.18h x 355.60w x 198.12d cm
PSW_2023_31



Paul Synbeck, *Kulche Gate*, 2023





Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *Tukulche Gate*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Nowhere a Vacuum, 2023
soda fired stoneware
3h x 13 1/2w x 11 1/4d in
7.62h x 34.29w x 28.57d cm
PSW_2023_11



Paul Swenbeck, *Nowhere a Vacuum*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *Nowhere a Vacuum*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Pat's Pass, 2023
soda fired stoneware
4h x 14w x 11d in
10.16h x 35.56w x 27.94d cm
PSW_2023_10



Paul Swenbeck, *Pat's Pass*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *Pat's Pass*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swerbeck, *Cross Quarters: Merry Meet*, 2023



Joy Feasley and Paul Swenbeck
Dolmen III, 2023
soda fired stoneware
32h x 16w x 13d in
81.28h x 40.64w x 33.02d cm
WWH_2023_01



Joy Feasley and Paul Swenbeck, *Dolmen III*, 2023





Paul Swenbeck
Dolmen IV, 2023
glazed stoneware, egyptian paste, mica, lights
28h x 27w x 24d in
71.12h x 68.58w x 60.96d cm
PSW_2023_29



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *Dolmen IV*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *Dolmen IV*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view. Paul Swenbeck. *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Kitty Swenbeck, 2023
soda fired stoneware
8h x 12w x 10d in
20.32h x 30.48w x 25.40d cm
PSW_2023_28



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023

Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
The Final Gift, 2023
glazed stoneware and wood
20h x 23w x 18d in
50.80h x 58.42w x 45.72d cm
PSW_2023_24





Paul Swenbeck, *The Final Gift*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *The Final Gift*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023

Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Monhegan Light, 2023
soda fired stoneware
9h x 17 1/2w x 11d in
22.86h x 44.45w x 27.94d cm
PSW_2023_03
\$5,500





Paul Swenbeck, *Monhegan Light*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view, Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023

Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023





Paul Swenbeck
Crisis Apparition, 2023
soda fired stoneware
18h x 17w x 12d in
45.72h x 43.18w x 30.48d cm
PSW 356



Paul Swenbeck, *Crisis Apparition*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *Crisis Apparition*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Dogwood Floriograph, 2023
soda fired stoneware
44h x 22w x 14d in
111.76h x 55.88w x 35.56d cm
PSW_2023_23

Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023





Paul Swinbeck, *Dogwood Floriograph*, 2023



Installation view. Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
The Amber Hunter, 2005
egyptian paste
4h x 11w x 6d in
10.16h x 27.94w x 15.24d cm
PSW_2005_09



Paul Swenbeck, *The Amber Hunter*, 2005



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view, Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Samhain Trap, 2023
soda fired stoneware
10h x 17w x 15d in
25.40h x 43.18w x 38.10d cm
PSW_2023_01



Paul Swenbeck, *Samhain Trap*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *Samhain Trap*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023

Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023





Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Emily's Bouquet, 2023
glazed stoneware
22h x 10w x 3d in
55.88h x 25.40w x 7.62d cm
PSW_2023_19



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023

Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023





Paul Swenbeck
Imbolc Trap, 2023
soda fired stoneware
16h x 15w x 12d in
40.64h x 38.10w x 30.48d cm
PSW_2023_02



Paul Swenbeck, *Imbolc Trap*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *Imbolc Trap*, 2023

Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023





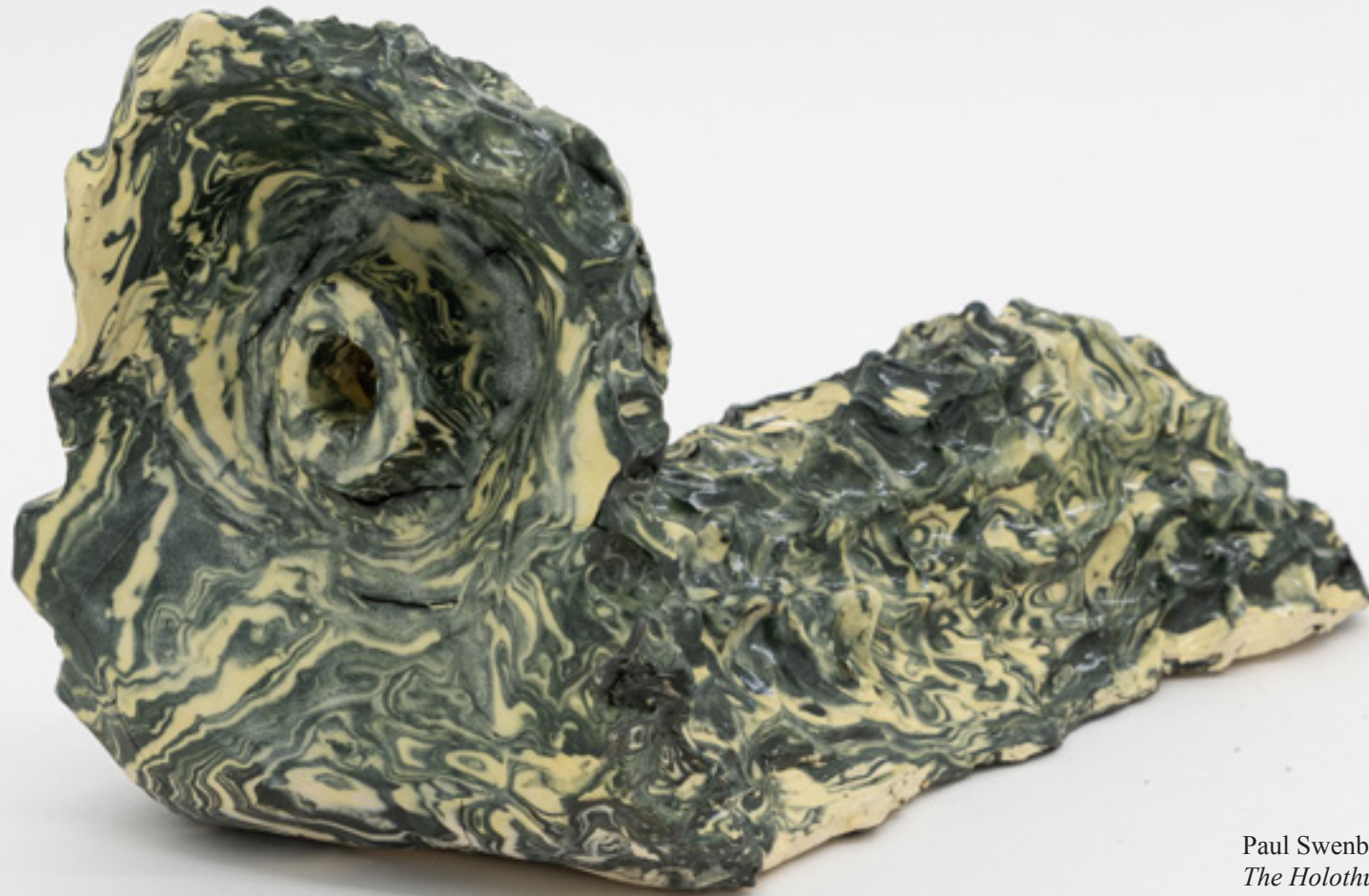
Paul Swenbeck
Hallucigenia Dreaming, 2023
soda fired stoneware
19h x 18w x 13d in
48.26h x 45.72w x 33.02d cm
PSW_2023_04



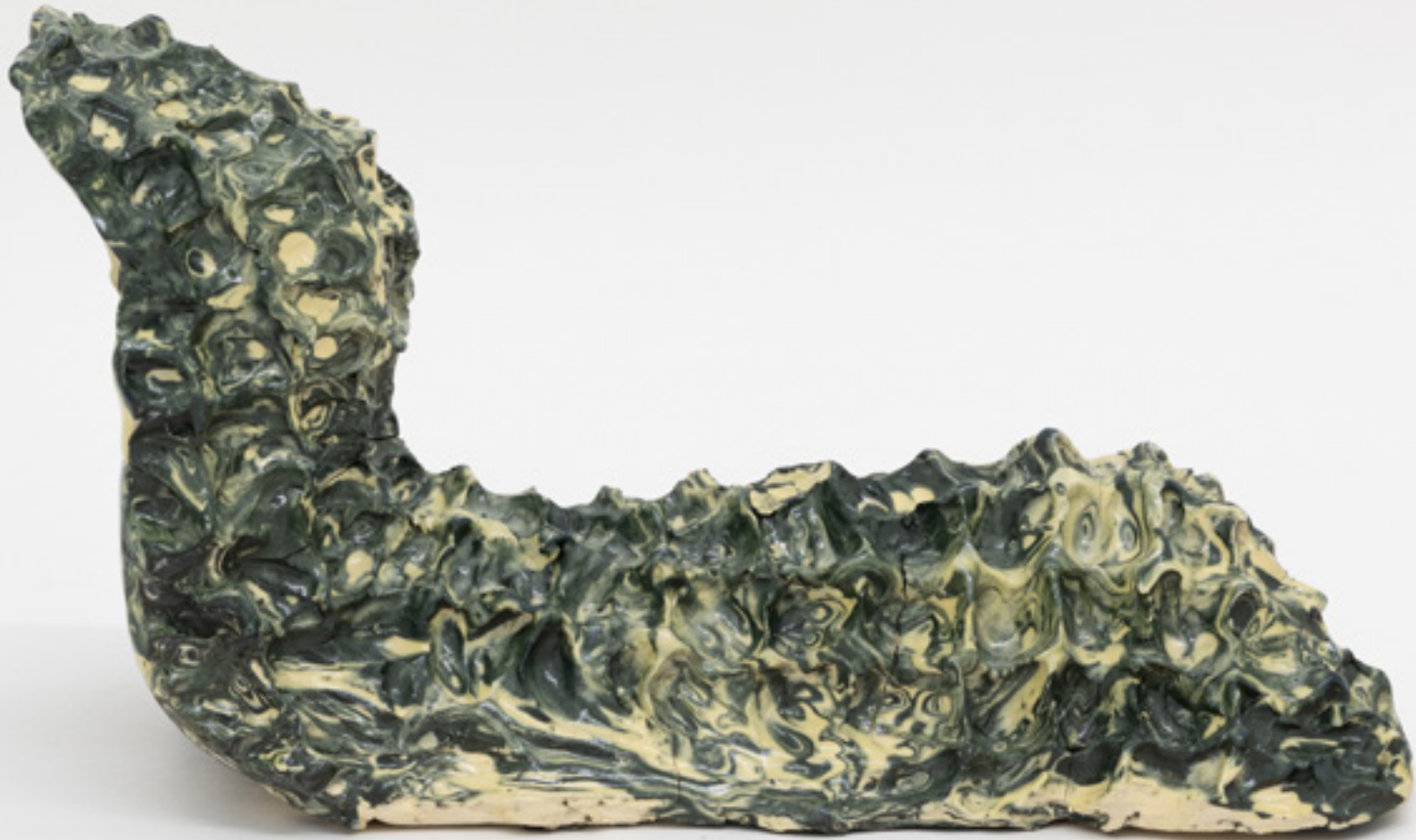
Paul Swenbeck, *Hallucigenia Dreaming*, 2023



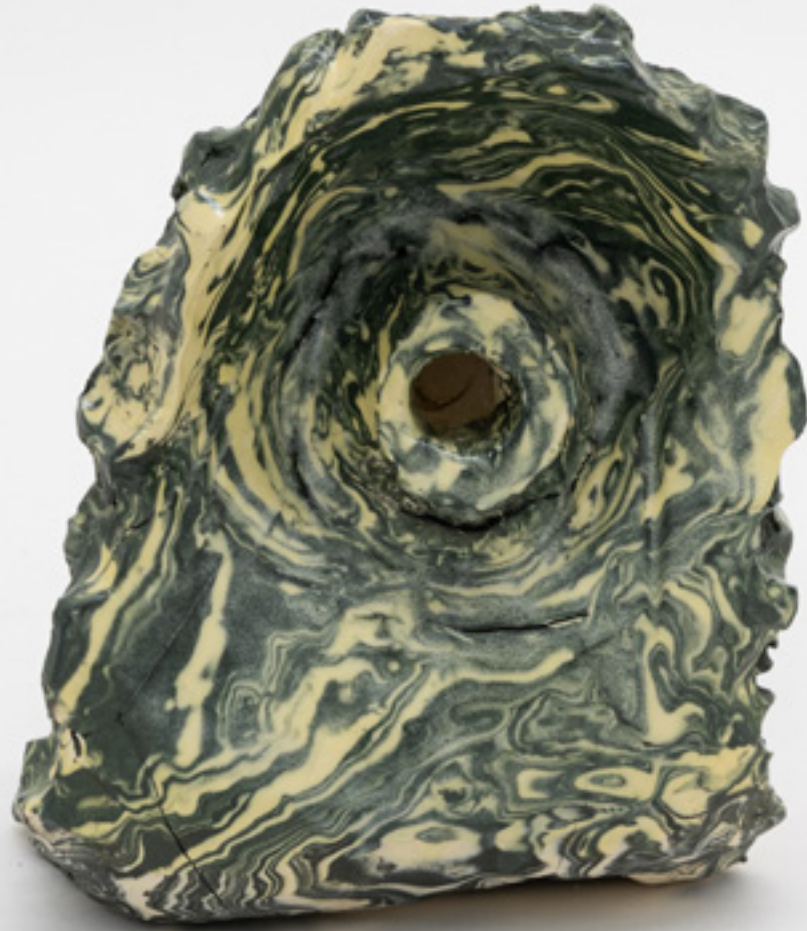
Paul Swenbeck, *Hallucigenia Dreaming*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
The Holothurian, 2023
glazed stoneware
7h x 13w x 6d in
17.78h x 33.02w x 15.24d cm
PSW_2023_13



Paul Swenbeck, *The Holothurian*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *The Holothurian*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Alien Familiar, 2023
soda fired stoneware
22h x 18w x 9d in
55.88h x 45.72w x 22.86d cm
PSW_2023_18



Paul Swenbeck, *Alien Familiar*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *Alien Familiar*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023

Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023





Paul Swenbeck
Shark Eater, 2023
glazed stoneware, plasticine
24h x 21w x 12d in
60.96h x 53.34w x 30.48d cm
PSW_2023_21



Paul Swenbeck, *Shark Eater*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
The Menace, 2023
glazed stoneware
30h x 20w x 14d in
76.20h x 50.80w x 35.56d cm
PSW_2023_20



Paul Swenbeck, *The Menace*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Brewing a Hail Storm, 2023
soda fired stoneware
26h x 20w x 20d in
66.04h x 50.80w x 50.80d cm
PSW_2023_22



Paul Swenbeck, *Brewing a Hail Storm*, 2013



Paul Swenbeck, *Brewing a Hail Storm*, 2015



Paul Swenbeck
My Owl Ate My Metal Worm, 2023
glazed stoneware
11 1/2h x 5w x 6d in
29.21h x 12.70w x 15.24d cm
PSW_2023_05



Paul Swenbeck, *My Owl Ate My Metal Worm*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
A Thief in Wormdom, 2023
soda fired stoneware
6 1/2h x 13w x 11 1/2d in
16.51h x 33.02w x 29.21d cm
PSW_2023_06



Paul Swenbeck, *A Thief in Wormdom*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *A Thief in Wormdom*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Glimmung's Daughter, 2017
cast iron
14h x 19w x 19 1/2d in
35.56h x 48.26w x 49.53d cm
PSW_2017_25



Paul Swenbeck, *Glimmung's Daughter*, 2017

Paul Swenbeck
Wrack Sentinel, 2023
brass
11h x 20w x 19d in
27.94h x 50.80w x 48.26d cm
PSW_2018_26





Paul Swenbeck, *Wrack Sentinel*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *Wrack Sentinel*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Panic Grass Trap, 2023
soda fired stoneware
20h x 14w x 12d in
50.80h x 35.56w x 30.48d cm
PSW_2023_17



Paul Swenbeck, *Panic Grass Trap*, 2023

Paul Swenbeck
Lobopod, 2023
soda fired stoneware, plasticine
17h x 17w x 23d in
43.18h x 43.18w x 58.42d cm
PSW_2023_30

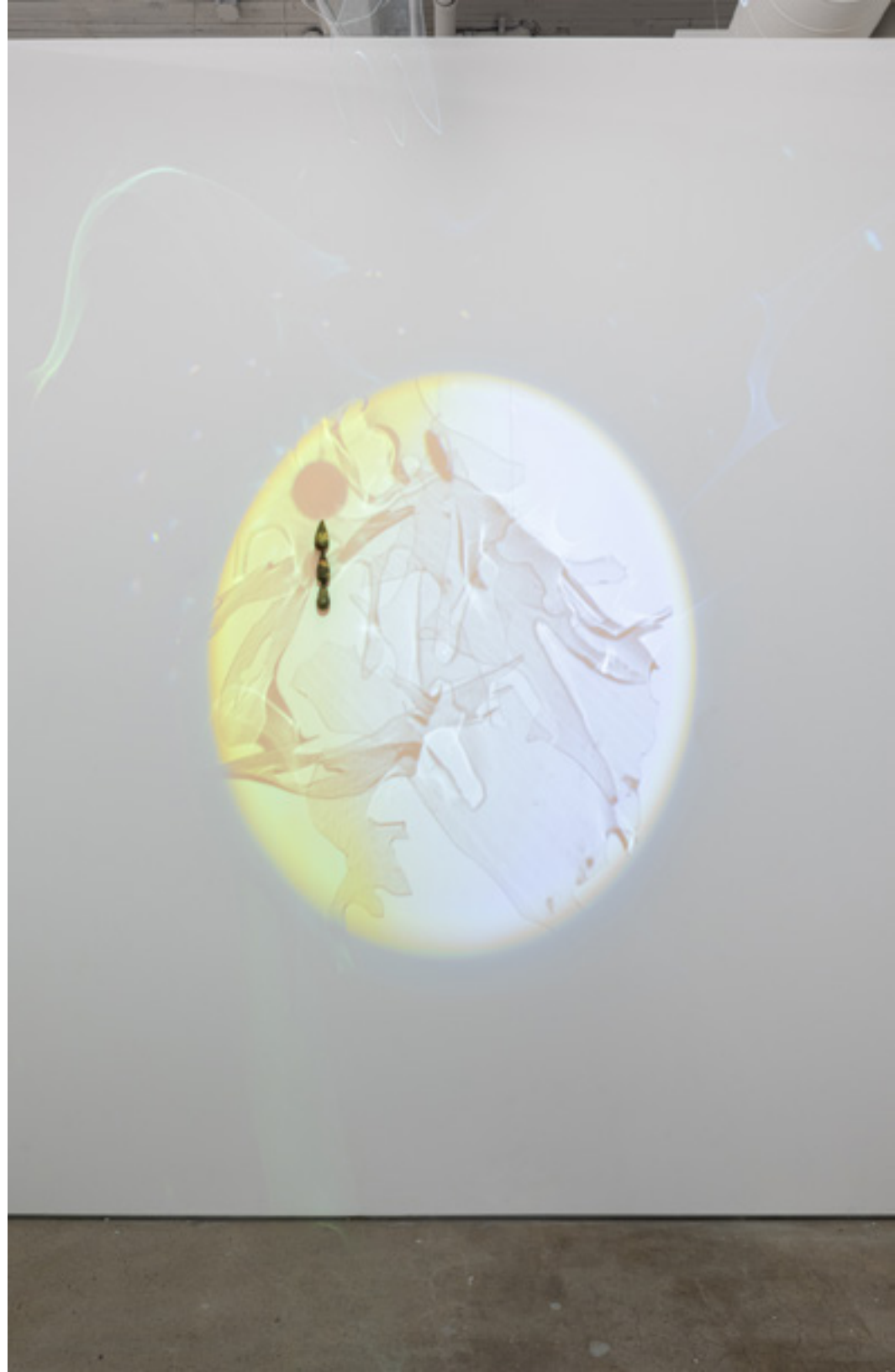




Paul Swenbeck, *Lobopod*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Will O' the Whisper, 2023
acrylic, glass crystals, soda fired stoneware, light
dimensions variable
PSW_2023_27



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
Born in the Sky, 2023
soda fired stoneware
16h x 11w x 5d in
40.64h x 27.94w x 12.70d cm
PSW_2023_07



Paul Swenbeck, *Born in the Sky*, 2023



Installation view: Paul Swenbeck, *Cross Quarters Merry Meet*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck
The Nightjar, 2023
soda fired stoneware
30h x 13w x 6d in
76.20h x 33.02w x 15.24d cm
PSW_2023_16



Paul Swenbeck, *The Nightjar*, 2023



Paul Swenbeck, *The Nightjar*, 2023