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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRANSFORMER proudly presents **E2: Carving a Path**, an exhibition of new work by **Djakarta**, **Ginger Farnham**, and **Nathan Manuel** - the 2nd year participants of *The Exercises for Emerging Artists*, a peer critique and mentorship program at Transformer.

E2: Carving a Path

July 9 – August 6, 2005

OPENING RECEPTION:

July 9, 2005, 7-9pm

ARTIST TALK:

July 23, 2005, 2pm



Launched in March 2004, *The Exercises for Emerging Artists* was created to support artists at critical points or crossroads in their professional growth and development. Consisting of a series of salon style gatherings at Transformer, the program is designed to stimulate and encourage participating artists as they create new work. Critique support and additional feedback are provided by Transformer's advisory council and staff, invited guest curators, and other arts professionals. This year's mentors included Transformer co-directors Jayme McLellan and Victoria Reis, artists Vesna Pavlovic, Ken Ashton, and Trish Tillman, and curator Sarah Tanguy.

Focusing on the specific needs and concerns of emerging artists in their mid to late 20's, the artists in **E2: Carving a Path** also participated in a series of professional development workshops for the grant awardees of the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities' Young Artist Program held this spring and summer at Transformer. Through the combined experience of professional development mentoring and peer critique interaction, each artist selected for the 2nd year of The Exercises was provided the opportunity to dialogue with their peers and arts professionals about the development of new work, the challenges they face as young artists, the inspiration that helps propel them forward, as well as their goals and future plans.

About the artists and their work:

Djakarta is a DC based artist who received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in photography from the Corcoran College of Art & Design in 2004. She studied commercial photography at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia before transferring to the Corcoran College in 2001. Djakarta's work has been selected for several DC area group shows, including Academy 2004 at Connor Contemporary as well as the most recent WPA/C annual art auction curated in part by Sally Troyer. She is the recipient of two grants from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Though her background is in photography, Djakarta's more recent work appropriates video, text and images from Hollywood movies, the military and print media, respectively, to examine various cultural phenomena related to what she identifies as the ever blurring lines of racial division and identity. In her present series, *Niggaz4Life*, she creates a recruitment agency of the same name. Djakarta states, "this agency acts on behalf of the black community in its aims to recruit well known, modern day 'mulattos' who identify themselves as bi-racial."

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Ginger Farnham is a Prince George's County, MD based artist who graduated in May 2005 from the Corcoran College of Art & Design with a degree in photography. Ginger uses photography as a personal journalistic medium, fueled by intuition and reaction. Her photo series *Six Months*, shown at the Corcoran B.F.A. Thesis Exhibition, was based on the idea of encapsulating memories with a camera and re-inventing the snapshot. She recently became interested in making photographic work that questions the role and function of the camera itself in today's American culture.

Her current series *Green*, produced during *The Exercises*, is a reflection of her re-acquaintance with her neighborhood. After spending the majority of her time in D.C. for school, she found that her residence in Greenbelt became only a resting place. Making these photographs following her graduation became a process of reintroduction and a way to gain a new intimacy with her old surroundings. Farnham states, "the images are lush, green and embracing - a reflection of my neighborhood itself. 'Old' Greenbelt, where I live, is the first of three planned communities built in the late 1930's and early 1940's as a part of FDR's New Deal. Modeled after English garden cities of the 19th century, it was named Greenbelt because of its surrounding forest and the belts of green between neighborhoods that offered easy contact with nature."

Nathan Manuel is a self-taught artist originally from Dallas, TX now living and working in Washington, DC. His paintings and drawings focus on a contemporary religious narrative told through the journeys of a flock of sheep. The stories establish a space for religious dialogue and create associations between form and place that layer his work both aesthetically and conceptually. This is done through materials he feels are closely affiliated with street and outsider art, such as spray paint and found text. The result is a unique mix of graphic and painterly images. Nathan is the recent recipient of a Young Artist Program grant and a Small Project Program grant from the DC Commission on Arts and Humanities.

Nathan states, "I create my work to foster an exchange about faith, art, and popular culture. I hope to inspire these conversations through my imagery and the raw materials my work is constructed from. Using appropriated advertisements and texts allows me to reference both the mass of data we must daily ingest and the aesthetics of outsider art. My mixed palette was heavily influenced by graffiti art found throughout the urban housing communities in which I was raised and my pencil drawings serve as a binding agent for the images bringing all of the graphic layers together. It is a rich time culturally to mix these urban aesthetics with religious references as our country is polarized and has linked that separation to faith and politics. It is a focus on this mixture that I believe can create a space of dialogue regarding such divisive issues."

Exhibition Hours for E2: Carving a Path: Wednesday – Saturday 1-7 pm. Also by appointment.

TRANSFORMER is a Washington, D.C. based 501(c) 3 non-profit, artist-centered organization that connects and promotes emerging artists locally, nationally and internationally. Partnering with artists, curators, art spaces and other cultural entities, Transformer serves as a catalyst and advocate for emergent expression in the visual arts. Transformer's 2004/2005 exhibition series is supported by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities/NEA, The Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, and the Visionary Friends of Transformer. Special thanks to Nick Pimentel of Planaria Design for his enduring support of Transformer.

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