

t r a n s f o r m e r

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 9, 2014

CONTACT: Victoria Reis/Julia Young
202.483.1102 or info@transformerdc.org

My Hands are the Shape of My Height September 20 – October 25, 2014

Opening Reception:
Saturday, September 20, 6-8pm

Artist Talk & Performance:
Saturday, October 11, 3pm
Tamar Ettun in conversation with Yael Reinharz, Executive Director of Artis
Co-presented by Artis, artiscontemporary.org



Transformer is honored to present a multi-media installation by Brooklyn-based Israeli artist **Tamar Ettun**, showcasing a selection of sculpture, photographs, performance, and video. Investigating the roles of sculpture and performance, the works exhibited explore these mediums' conceptual capabilities, examining their ability to stimulate a physical reaction or sensation within the viewer when their functions are interchanged.

My Hands are the Shape of My Height at Transformer stems from *Performing Stillness*, a series Ettun continues to develop, constructed from fragments of casted body parts that continue to grow in size and complexity, investigating the physical body and the world around us. Obscuring the relationship between objects by breaking, assembling, and distorting their appearance, Ettun transforms these objects into unique works with abstracted narratives contrived through their newfound stillness.

Sourcing familiar, functional objects that have been discarded, Ettun reconstructs materials, stripping the original object of its use and meaning. "The sculptures and performances reflect two sides of my philosophy about movement and stillness, temporality and permanence," explains Ettun. "I attempt to invert the two – the performances investigate the ability to be still and durational, and the sculptures capture the most gestural, brief movements."

Influenced by the recent war in Israel, Ettun has begun to explore the physical symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in her work. PTSD manifests itself in a number of ways – bodily movement, hyper arousal, extreme fear, and flash backs, among several other affects. "I was amazed to find out that one of the symptoms of PTSD is the inability to feel empathy towards others and increased difficulty forming relationships," explains Ettun. "I want to convey the bodily imprints of trauma by casting clothes and gloves that embody physical gestures: the body is absent and what is left is the memory of the movement. Clothes and gloves protect and cover our bodies from the outside world; here, they serve as an empty shell, evidence of the event."

This body of work is a continuation of Ettun's investigation into the relationship between performance and sculpture. "How can sculpture and performance change roles and influence each other," asks Ettun. "Can a sculpture create a physical reaction or sensation in the viewer's body? I hope to arouse physical reaction from the viewers by creating sculptures on a human scale that assume vaguely recognizable bodily positions. The sculptures articulate familiar movement and body parts, yet their arrangement is incoherent and distorted."

It's Not a Question of Anxiety, Ettun's video piece in the exhibition, was conceived while investigating how personal and religious rituals function similarly to sculpture and movement: both fixed and unchanging, though

1404 P Street NW Washington, DC 20005 | 202.483.1102 | www.transformerdc.org

t r a n s f o r m e r

their existence is essentially ephemeral. "Personal rituals are often the result of personal trauma, and this video highlights this," explains Ettun. "Personal rituals may seem pointless to the external onlooker, but like religious rituals, they have meaning when seen from the inside." This video is a series of 'made-up' personal, formal actions of bodies and objects, and is structured similarly to the *Performing Stillness* series, playing with colors, masses and obscured shapes.

Tamar Ettun is a Brooklyn-based multimedia artist from Jerusalem, Israel. Ettun received her MFA from Yale University in 2010 where she was awarded the Alice English Kimball Fellowship. Ettun studied at Cooper Union in 2007, while earning her BFA from Bezalel Academy. Ettun's solo exhibition and performances include: NADA NYC with Artis (2014); One and One, One and Two, One and Three, One and Four, at Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv (2014); The Lion Who Liked Strawberries, PS3 Studio, The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas commissioned by Art Production Fund (2013); One Thing Leads To Another, Indianapolis Museum of Art (2013), and Performa 11 presented by RECESS (2011), One Thing Leads To Another: Part 2; Andrea Meislin Gallery (2012); Empty Is Also, in collaboration with Emily Coates for Performa 09 presented by the X-Initiative (2009). She has been honored by several organizations including The Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant, MacDowell Fellowship, Abron's Art Center, The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Art Production Fund, Socrates Sculpture Park, America Israel Cultural Foundation, The World Performance Project, Artis, Yale School of Art, RECESS, and Triangle Workshop Residency.

Exhibition Hours: Wednesday – Saturday, noon – 6pm, and by appointment.

Image: Tamar Ettun, *Yellow in a Circle on Turquoise*, digital print, 2014

t r a n s f o r m e r is a Washington, DC based 501 (c) 3 artist-centered non-profit visual arts organization, providing a consistent, supportive, and professional platform for emerging artists to explore and present experimental artistic concepts, build audiences for their work, and advance their careers. A catalyst and advocate for contemporary artists and emergent expression in the visual arts, Transformer connects and promotes emerging visual artists within regional, national and international contexts through exhibition and programs partnerships with artists, curators, commercial galleries, museums and other cultural institutions.

t r a n s f o r m e r's 2014/15 Exhibition Series and programs are supported by: The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities/ NEA, The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The Bernstein Family Foundation, The Robert Lehman Foundation, The CrossCurrents Foundation, The S&R Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts' Access to Artistic Excellence Award, and The Visionary Friends of Transformer – individual donors, members of our Annual Auction Host Committee, and Corporate Sponsors.

אָרטיס אַרטיס
artis

Based in New York, Los Angeles, and Tel Aviv, **Artis** is an independent nonprofit organization that broadens international awareness and understanding of contemporary visual art from Israel. Artis provides important resources, programs, and platforms for artists and art professionals to develop lasting partnerships and exchanges with the global art community and the general public. The organization's activities include: Public Programs in New York, Los Angeles, and Tel Aviv; the Artis Grant and Scholarship program; Research Trips to Israel; Professional Development Initiatives; and our online resource, artiscontemporary.org.