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Transformer presents: **Little Creatures**

December 10, 2005 – January 14, 2006

**Marci Branagan, Julie Jenkinson,
Thomas M. Lowery and Maki Maruyama**

OPENING RECEPTION:
Saturday, December 10, 2005, 7-9 pm

ARTIST TALK:
Saturday, January 7, 2006, 4 pm

Incorporating a range of aesthetics and inspirations including art brut, Japanese comic book art, taxidermy and naturalism, found objects, odd experience, and redefined memories, the artists in *Little Creatures* – **Marci Branagan** (Baltimore, MD), **Julie Jenkinson** (Toronto, ON), **Thomas M. Lowery** (Alexandria, VA) and **Maki Maruyama** (Washington, DC) - explore imagined worlds of human-like characters and "beasties" through drawing, painting and small sculpture.

Each of the artists in *Little Creatures* brings a unique personal history to their work. All have lived abroad for some portion of their life and in their formative years developed their own distinct way of relating to their cultural surroundings. The artists incorporate diverse past experiences and process fragmented memories to create their own realities expressed through the animals and characters in their work. Often presenting their "little creatures" as fragments themselves, the artists' work creates commentary about feelings of disconnectedness, trying to relate to others, and perceived reality - all relating back to somewhat familiar archetypes of collective unconsciousness; the little creatures that we see with our eyes, in our conscious imaginations, and in our dreams.

Eliminating all but faces from the people **Maki Maruyama** creates in his work, the artist defines his characters as "merely floating heads communicating with each other." **Thomas M. Lowery** creates work based on his collection of found photographs and recently antiquated items, which act as background for the masked kids playing out stories based on his memories. **Marci Branagan** also incorporates found materials into her work. Investigating the vocabulary of animalia, the objects Marci uses are "idiomatic elements of taxidermy and naturalism but from the cloudy world of urban nature. The raw materials are part of the waylorn products of the world." **Julie Jenkinson's** creatures are the playful responses to overheard conversations, her imagination, and life experiences: "Down the block from us; in the junkyard of a taxi repair shop in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, was a ferociously handsome brindle Staffordshire terrier, 'No, Heroin is a pitbull. He's a lover too. Do you want to get closer?' Heroin would stop bearing his teeth, his muscles would go limp and his tail would wag when we stuck our hands through the gap in the gate and petted him." Exploring place, action, emotion and identity, the artists' little creatures share with the viewer the playful, scary, raw, and ethereal aspects of our humanity.

Marci Branagan was born in Washington, D.C. in 1981 and has lived in the Baltimore and Washington area for much of her life. Her father's occupation led him along with her mom, sister, brother and herself, to move frequently, usually around intervals of two years. This included foreign stations in Europe and the Middle East. These early experiences were informative in her sensitivity to place and

t r a n s f o r m e r

language. Marci states, "This inconsistency in living space is partially what accounts for my habit of forming my own space in representation." Marci attended the Corcoran College of Art and Design, within the Fine Art, multidisciplinary program, where she formed systems in which to work and think. In approaching her current work, Marci states, "The tools of my practice are that of an archivist and naturalist; the outcome is an ideological inventory of my collections. As museums work to translate the world of objects into the world of text and meaning, I develop systems for renaming the fragments which constitute my own collections."

Julie Jenkinson was born in Coventry, England. Julie is a self-taught artist residing in Toronto, Canada. She has exhibited her artwork in Toronto and Washington DC. In writing about her work, Julie states, "My chimeras evolve from memory and imagination rather than direct observation or preliminary sketches. I'm interested in expressing the raw space of my emotion. I love the subversive reality in vintage cartoons as much as the complexity in primitive renderings of animals and characters. I feel a connection to the eccentricity in certain animals. In my work the creatures act out the absurdity and vulnerability in the underbelly of humanity."

Thomas M. Lowery was born on a ship that was traveling from Scandinavia to the US. His work reflects these rocky beginnings. "They're an attempt to illustrate naive romantic feelings," he says of his various drawings, projections and paintings that feature fireflies talking about the status of their relationships, teenage kids wearing skeleton masks, and talking drum kits, among other things. His work has been shown across the country in galleries and publications and his hand-made series of books "Snakehandling" was featured by AIGA Baltimore in 2004. He currently resides just outside of Washington, D.C. with his wife, Rachel.

Maki Maruyama was born in Tokyo, Japan. As a teenager, he experienced both Japanese and American Pop culture directly influencing the art he continues to make today. In writing about his current body of work, Maki states, "The floating heads in my drawings have individuality through the color and shape of their hair. They may not gain an individual identity, but an identity as a part of a color-coded group. Their loss of individuality is represented through their voice, depicted only as a wave of sound. Their communication becomes meaningless, except when those lines connect one to another and become a tool for them to bond with each other." After graduating from the Corcoran College of Art & Design in 2005, he remains in the Washington, D.C. area to continue his art making. His exhibition history includes: *Triad Show* – Baltimore, MD; Corcoran College of Art and Design Senior Exhibition; Conner Contemporary Art - Academy 2005 Show.

Exhibition Hours for *Little Creatures*: Wednesday – Saturday 1- 7 pm, and 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 2005/2006 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.

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