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Transformer launches its 6th exhibition season with:

SASS

September 15 - October 20, 2007

OPENING RECEPTION: Saturday, September 15, 7-9pm

PERFORMANCE: *Show and Prove*, a dance-theatre work by Holly Bass, Thursday, September 27, 6:30 - 8pm

Featuring work in a variety of disciplines including photo-collage, video, performance, painting, drawing, and mixed media installation, SASS offers a small survey of contemporary artwork by a new generation of women artists. **Holly Bass** (WDC), **Amanda Douglas** (Lexington, KY), **Natalia Fabia** (LA, CA), **Danniel Swatosh** (NYC), and **Lisa Marie Thalhammer** (WDC) each explore concepts of femininity, identity, and pop culture perceptions of women through their diverse artistic endeavors.

Holly Bass – (*Uppity Negroes on*) *Parade* includes a series of performances, lectures and short videos all about freedom: how we find and express freedom in our own lives and how we inspire others to find their freedom. Asking the question, “What does it mean to be Black in the 21st century?” while at the same time celebrating a century of black movement and culture - Holly describes (*Uppity Negroes on*) *Parade* as “Uppity, ‘cause we ain’t taking no stuff; Negroes, ‘cause we go way back; and *On Parade*, because like Rick James said, it’s a celebration!” The completed piece Holly will present with *Show & Prove* on September 27 will consist of interrelated vignettes. The cast consists of four women and two men. The choreography blends elements of Brazilian capoeira, b-girling, popular dance and modern dance. The piece uses original music by underground hip hop artists such as Berlin-based RQM and Keyote, a DC-area emcee, along with recited text and pre-recorded music. Holly’s video work will be on view at Transformer throughout the SASS exhibition. She will be experimenting with a public art piece at the opening reception of SASS on September 15.

Holly Bass is a writer, choreographer and performer. She has presented her solo work at the Kennedy Center (DC), the Whitney Museum (NY) and the Experience Music Project (Seattle). Critics have praised her one-woman-show, *Diary of a Baby Diva*, as “mesmerizing” (*Village Voice*) and “indisputably funny” (*Washington Post*). She curated the NYC Hip Hop Theater Festival for three years and was the first journalist to put the term “hip hop theater” into print in 1999. She has received two Artist Fellowship grants from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and was recently awarded a Hip Hop Community Arts Initiative grant to develop (*Uppity Negroes on*) *Parade*; sections of this work have been performed at the 2005 In Site series curated by Jane Jerardi, the 2005 DC Improv Festival, Dissident Display Gallery, and the 2006 and 2007 DC Hip Hop Theater Festivals. Holly studied modern dance (under Viola Farber) and creative writing at Sarah Lawrence College before earning a Master’s in Journalism from Columbia University.

Amanda Douglas - The *Beaut-Ease* product line presented in SASS consists of several machines that are a hybrid between beauty products and infomercial products. Both industries flourish on a level of falsehood that teeters on the brink of hilarity. Amanda turns this quick fix notion on its head, making machines that actually complicate matters rather than make them easier to complete. “The machine format gives my work an interesting amount of built-in interactivity while showcasing the daily grind of life. The idea of the false promises perpetuated in the beauty industry fascinates me. Marketing companies have mastered an art that taps into desires. The world of the media brings us an artificial reality—everywhere—everyday. The level of exposure tells us not only to buy and buy a lot, it hooks us with values and concepts such as popularity, sexuality, worth, and success. With the push of a button life becomes amazingly easy and our mundane chores are done in a snap. The products appear so enticing and they work like magic. “

Amanda Douglas is a recent graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University. She is currently a studio artist outside of Lexington, KY. She has her own flair for fashion and glamour that streamlines itself throughout her work.

t r a n s f o r m e r

Natalia Fabia - Women, environments, light, texture, and colors are subjects that greatly influence Natalia and are essential in her paintings. Voyeurism is also something she is fascinated with, especially the saturation of voyeurism in popular media that has created a culture of infatuation with the lives of others. "Visually pleasing along with sleazy subjects, interiors and decoration are present in my work. Often using my friends, fellow artists and strangers I meet while out socially as models, I place them in real or made-up surroundings. The worlds I want to depict are related to contemporary culture, but are also open to interpretation. My intent is to gain a reaction from the viewer, whether it is positive or negative. My paintings suggest certain themes but do not give anything away. Although a number of my paintings come off as in-your-face or undisguised they still contain a hidden meaning."

Natalia Fabia lives and works in Los Angeles. Painting and art has continually been in her life. Having attended Pasadena's Art Center College of Design, Natalia applies her skill, talent and ability to create an academic and painterly, yet new-age and narrative approach to her colorful portrayals of friends and environments. Always being influenced by fashion and jewelry, Natalia started creating her own clothing and jewelry. Her paintings incorporate many of her unique designs, usually styling her models in her jewelry and dresses. She started her company Hookerfeathers in 2006; a jewelry and clothing line, specializing in custom jewelry. The line is sold on line and select stores in Los Angeles, New York, and Japan. www.nataliafabia.com; www.hookerfeathers.com

Danniel Swatosh - The images that make up "The Sublime and the Beautiful" series featured in SASS are pulled from soft pornographic publications and then placed into images of the natural world. The final product serves as a presentation of visual puns that reclaim the clichés of sexual innuendo. "The male gaze within the history of photography has symbolically dominated both the female form in pornography and the natural landscape. The abrupt recognition of the implausibility depicted within the doctored images is intended to conjure in the viewer questions pertaining to identity, fantasy, stereotypes and performance."

Prior to earning a BFA in Photography from Parson School of Design, Danniel's academic endeavors were focused on American History and Psychology. These areas of study served as strong influences on the conceptual content and process of her artistic output. Danniel's interest in the recorded image has been developing over the last decade. Over this period, she has come to understand her camera as an important tool in the process of recording performative actions, capturing visual material slated for digital manipulation and creating finished images.

Lisa Marie Thalhammer - The structure of Transformer's gallery walls inspired memories of the stain glass windows within Lisa Marie's childhood Catholic church. "As hours would pass within this structure I would loose my thoughts by gazing upon this beautiful religious iconography. Further drawing upon my young experiences working and living with in the male dominated subculture of a Middle American truck stop, I collage feminized body parts from different fashion and men's interest magazines creating *lot lizards*, a slang term for a truck stop prostitute." Embellished with appropriated gospel illuminations and Byzantine patters, Lisa Marie's *lizards* are enthroned upon hand-drawn semi-trucks combining references from the two most dominate female figures within Catholic mythology; the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene. "I attempt to merge these two definitions of femininity by placing the *lot lizard* in classic positions similar to the Madonna and Child. Cherubs, created by underwater photography of my female friends, encircle the *lot lizard*. They symbolize the transcending of this traditional female sexual dichotomy by referencing the rebirth of baptism."

Lisa Marie Thalhammer received a BFA with honors and a women studies minor from the University of Kansas in 2003. She has lived/worked in Washington DC since 2004. Thalhammer's recent exhibitions include *Welcome to Lizard County* at G Fine Arts and *Don't Fear for the Future Sweetness* curated by SunTek Chung at Gallery 5 in Richmond Virginia. Recent art fairs include ArtDC and PULSE New York. Thalhammer is also a 2007 recipient of the *Young Artist Program Grant Award* from DC Commission of the Arts & Humanities. Lisa Marie was a participant in Transformer's 2006 Exercises Program – *E3 Painters*, which helped inspire the creation of her *lot lizards* series now furthered through SASS.

Exhibition Hours for SASS: Wednesday – Saturday 1- 7 pm, and by appointment.

TRANSFORMER is a Washington, D.C. based 501(c) 3 non-profit, artist-centered visual arts 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 2007/2008 exhibition series is 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 Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, and The Visionary Friends of Transformer.

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