

# t r a n s f o r m e r

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Transformer is pleased to present:

## *Sustainability Lab*

May 1-8; June 2-12, 2010

OPENING DAY: Saturday, May 1, 2010; 3 – 4pm  
*The New Cultural Worker*, a presentation by Jeff Hnilicka

THIS POSTCARD IS A PARTICIPATORY PERFORMANCE.  
MAKE ZINES. BARTER. PLANT GUERRILLA GARDENS. DO LESS WITH LESS. JOIN A CSA FARM SHARE. PRACTICE (NOW) RESPONSIBLE GROWTH. TAKE IT ONLINE. NOW TAKE IT OFFLINE. NOW TAKE IT ONLINE. AGAIN. HANDCRAFT IT. LEARN BASIC BIKE MAINTENANCE. HANG OUT IN CHURCH BASEMENTS. START A GIFT ECONOMY. MAKE IT CEREMONIAL. JOIN OR QUIT A SOCIAL NETWORK. GET A (GREEN) JOB. FACILITATE COOPERATIVE CHILDCARE. EMBRACE OPEN SOURCE. BE A POST-CONSUMER. START AN URBAN WINDOW FARM. STAY LOCALLY SOURCED. BE QUEER. COMPOST. LIVE AND WORK AND SLEEP AND DO IT IN TINY HOUSES. ESTABLISH ALTERNATIVE FAMILY STRUCTURES. FOSTER GREEN ROOFS. BUILD UP OUR COLLECTIVIST CREDIT SCORE. PARTICIPATE. PARTICIPATE.  
THANK YOU.

With *Sustainability Lab*, artist-in-residence Jeff Hnilicka will operate an investigatory 'think tank' in Transformer's project space, creating a venue for workshops and artistic actions that explore emerging models of cultural production, the sustainability of these models, and their impact within communities. Illustrating how experimental play can operate as critical investigation methods, Hnilicka will engage with DC artists, activists, cultural workers, and audiences to identify and analyze examples of local resources, human and otherwise, through a series of programs.

Punctuated with potluck dinners and lunches, programs will directly involve audiences in shared experience as discoveries are made in the examination of how various entities sustain their work. Activities include: "Dreams and Schemes" – a workshop with Hnilicka and celebrated DC artist Jeff Spaulding about sustaining your practice as a working artist and the value of unrealized projects; "Mini Empire Builder" – a series of mini-adventures and guerilla style public performances on the DC Metro; and a "HIT BOOK! Workshop" – in which members of Hit Factorie (Brooklyn, NY) and participants in the DC community will collaborate to create a free *Sustainability Lab* book.

On the opening day of *Sustainability Lab*, Hnilicka will present "The New Cultural Worker", in celebration of Beltane (marking the end of winter) and International Worker's Day. Audiences are invited to take part in Hnilicka's interactive presentation as he explores new methods of producing and consuming culture: "Dream who you'll become this growing season and imagine new ways of organizing our communities."

Additionally, audiences are invited to engage with Hnilicka's *Sustainability Lab* installation within Transformer's project space on an on-going basis. For the past 2 years, Jeff Hnilicka has been investigating the question, "What is sustainable?" In his participatory presentation/installation of suspended, note-laden visqueen panels, Hnilicka shares numerous models, projects, programs, and communities that are answering his query. Sample subject matter includes: Our Goods - a peer-to-peer artist barter network; Artist-Run Benefit Society – a collectivist credit league for independent art groups; Seeding the City – a public art project that hopes to install 1 square foot of green roof on 1000 roofs in NYC; and Community Supported Art – a group of art-collectors who fund artists' up front costs inspired by the organic farm-share model. Along with documenting sustainable community projects from around the country, the installation will record ideas and feedback from the DC community, as Hnilicka shares his notes with audience and encourages them to offer their own ideas about what is going to last. Contributions to this portable, aggregating collection of histories, dreams, and schemes will travel with Hnilicka this spring to his projects in DC, Philadelphia, Portland, Chicago, Minneapolis, NY, and many points in between for further information sharing and gathering.

Information and experience Hnilicka garners from *Sustainability Lab* this May will be shared via *Empire Builder* – an epic train voyage to Portland, OR in which nearly 30 participants will join along the way, creating guerilla public programs for fellow train-riders, and also at *Open Engagement* – a conference in Portland exploring similar themes (May 14-17, 2010) ([www.openengagement.info](http://www.openengagement.info)). While *Empire Builder* is active (May 9 – May 20), Transformer's website will link to its participants' blog, where the artists will share their experiences as they unfold. Hnilicka will then be back at Transformer in June, further investigating and interpreting the outcomes of these experiences with DC audiences.

**Jeff Hnilicka** is an independent aesthetic practitioner currently exploring the national landscape of sustainable cultural production. He is co-founder of FEAST - Funding Emerging Art with Sustainable Tactics. He has worked at Walker Art Center, MASS MoCA, J Mandle Performance, Minnesota Public Radio, and is a founding member of Revolting Queers and Hit Factorie. He recently completed residencies at MASS MoCA and West Bank Social Center and will be in residency at Elsewhere in October-November 2010. Hnilicka served as panelist for community artist funding at Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and is featured in Temporary Services Art Work. In 2009, Jeff was awarded a Future Leadership Fellowship by National Arts Strategies. Jeff will be leading participatory projects this year in DC, Philadelphia, New York City, and Portland.

# t r a n s f o r m e r

In tandem with *Sustainability Lab*, Transformer is pleased to present:

## **CORNFIELD**

May 13 - May 29

### **CORNFIELD PERFORMANCES:**

Friday, May 21: 6, 7:30 & 9:30pm;

Saturday, May 22: 4, 6, 7:30, & 9:30pm



Continuing to explore themes introduced through *Sustainability Lab* (May 1-8; June 2-12), Transformer is proud to introduce the DC debut of *Cornfield* (May 13 - May 29, 2010), an installation and performance piece by artist Nancy Bannon. Manifesting a life-size, fabricated cornfield within Transformer's project space, audiences are invited to consider uses and preservation of natural resources. *Cornfield* is a visual work consisting of a wall-to-wall field of seven-foot tall, sculpted corn stalks made of painted wood, wire and visqueen, along with projections and a surrounding soundscape. During intense performances, three live performers within the cornfield echo the depletive qualities of the giant corn monoculture that is consuming America's agricultural tradition. Audiences directly experience the performances from within the installation at close proximity to the actors.

*Cornfield* performances will take place Friday, May 21 at 6, 7:30 & 9:30pm, and Saturday, May 22 at 4, 6, 7:30, & 9:30pm. **All performances are free; advance registration required. Parents strongly cautioned – performances contain adult language and topics.**

**Nancy Bannon** performed for many years as a dancer with Doug Varone, Tere O'Connor and Lar Lubavitch, and as an actor focusing mostly on the development of new work. She now creates her own interdisciplinary theater. Along with *Cornfield*, she is also known for The Pod Project, an installation of private, one-on-one performances originally at 20 Greene Gallery (NYC). Nancy is the recipient of three Princess Grace Awards and a 2001 New York Dance and Performance (Bessie) Award. She has served on the faculties of SUNY Purchase and Rutgers University and has taught independently throughout the U.S. Nancy is a graduate of The Juilliard School. This March, Nancy was invited to participate in a Philip Johnson Glass House Conversation along with filmmaker Darron Aronofsky, poet Erin Belieu, graphic designer Paula Scher, and others. This spring, the 92nd St. Y (NYC) will present her newest work, *Drinking Ink*.

For more information about *Sustainability Lab*, *Cornfield* and other Transformer exhibitions and programs, please see our website: [www.transformergallery.org](http://www.transformergallery.org), or contact us at 202.483.1102 or [info@transformergallery.org](mailto:info@transformergallery.org).

EXHIBITION HOURS: Wednesday – Saturday, 1 – 7pm & by appointment.

Images: Jeff Hnilicka, *Sustainability Lab* sketch; Nancy Bannon, *Cornfield* detail, photo by Brian MacDevitt.

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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. Transformer's 2009/2010 exhibition series and programs are supported by: The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The CrossCurrents Foundation, The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities/NEA, The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts' *Access to Artistic Excellence* award, and The Visionary Friends of Transformer.