

transformers

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transformers

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VICTORIA REIS

CO-FOUNDER, EXECUTIVE & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
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transform, transforming, **Transformer**

What started out as means to support a shared vision of working with artists and other creative friends and colleagues in developing and presenting innovative arts activities in DC, Transformer has grown to become a dynamic conduit for emerging artists, building audiences for emergent expression through our Exhibition Series and our many unique educational programs. Since our first exhibition *Mica & Misaki* was presented in June 2002, Transformer has provided a consistent, supportive, and professional platform for emerging artists to explore and present experimental artistic concepts, and for audiences to engage with these concepts in new and progressive ways.

Transformer has advanced more than 2000 emerging artists in their careers over the past nine years, while increasing dialogue about and understanding of contemporary visual art in Washington, DC and beyond. We have achieved this through an artist-centered approach to our work, which encourages experimentation with ideas, process, and presentation, as well as through our creative collaborations with artists, curators, collectors, arts spaces, galleries and gallerists, arts enthusiasts, museums and other cultural institutions.

Designed to serve as a catalyst and advocate for emergent expression in the visual arts by connecting and promoting emerging artists based locally, regionally, nationally and internationally through comprehensive exhibition and program collaborations, Transformer has established and continues to grow relationships with an extraordinary array of individuals and organizations in the development and presentation of our work. Through these relationships, Transformer has had great impact on the cultural landscape of DC, introducing original ways of working to support artists through distinctive exhibition partnerships. We are thrilled that both the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and the Corcoran College of Art + Design have embraced Transformer's work and continue to encourage their students and staff to collaborate with us.

transformers highlights a selected group of dynamic artists that have graduated from the Corcoran, and whom Transformer has helped in launching and enhancing their professional careers. These artists have achieved success through acceptance into MFA and artist residency programs, representation by commercial galleries, participation in national and international museum, gallery, and non-profit art space exhibitions and art fairs, and inclusion of their work in private and museum collections. We acknowledge these artists for helping to define Transformer's successful programming aesthetic, as we look to the artists in *transformers: the next generation*

who are just starting out in their careers, to pioneer new ground in the contemporary arts with us.

Transformer works to strengthen community by supporting emerging artists in their development. In tandem with this, Transformer has grown and thrived through the support of an extensive community of people and organizations in DC. We thank you all for supporting us in our continued evolution.

We have had the great pleasure of garnering the support of many wonderful administrators and educators at The Corcoran Gallery of Art and The Corcoran College of Art + Design as Transformer has evolved. My thanks to all of them for their support over the years, especially Andy Grundberg, Philip Brookman, Frank DiPerna, Casey Smith, Ken Ashton, and more recently Fred Bollerer, Sarah Newman, Beatrice Galton, Sarah Durke, Kristin Guitter, and Allie Gallo.

Special thanks to Kirk Pillow, former Provost and Interim President of the Corcoran College of Art + Design, for championing the *transformers* exhibition early on in its development, and for confirming its presentation at Gallery 31. Additional thanks to Christina DePaul for her support of the artists in the *transformers* exhibition, many of whom were students during her tenure as Dean of the Corcoran College of Art + Design. Further thanks to Joe Hale for his incredible support in presenting *transformers* at Gallery 31, as well as to Noelle Weber for her design of this catalogue and the *transformers* exhibition card.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the artists in *transformers* and *transformers: the next generation*, and all of the artists that have participated in our Exhibition Series since Transformer's inception. The creativity they have shared with Transformer, their questioning of the status quo and willingness to challenge themselves, have imbued Transformer with a vitality that has grown leaps and bounds over the past nine years. It has been a great honor to work with each of them.

As Transformer enters our 10th year of programming this fall, we look forward to how "the next generation" of artists will inspire us in our work, and the continued innovative ways we can further connect and promote them as they emerge in their careers.

Victoria Reis
Co-Founder, Executive & Artistic Director: Transformer

CASEY SMITH

CORCORAN PROFESSOR,
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER: TRANSFORMER

transformers

What is the meaning of democracy, freedom, human dignity, standard of living, self-realization, fulfillment? Is it a matter of goods, or of people? Of course it is a matter of people. But people can be themselves only in small comprehensible groups.

When I came across this quotation from EF Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*, it set my mind to thinking about education in general, and arts education in particular. Even though Schumacher, a deceased Marxist economist, wrote this back in 1973, his belief in cultivating an economy based on "small comprehensible groups" has only grown in urgency. The Corcoran College of Art + Design and Transformer are potent examples of Schumacher's central thesis: both have resisted the idea (myth) of a monolithic "Art World" in which success is gauged solely by status markers on the New York/Miami-Basel/Berlin, etc. axis. Both conceive of art-making and art-discourse as open systems capable of constant reinvention. And both see that the present—the now—is also part of history. This is reflected in the curriculum of the college and the programming of Transformer. But more important than curriculum and programming is the idea of the power of the small comprehensible group that both the Corcoran and Transformer embody.

Ten years ago Transformer (under founders Victoria Reis and Jayme McLellan) brought a new model to DC for exhibiting emerging artists. Transformer has never privileged visual art, and exhibition itself has only been part of its mission: dance, poetry, politics, the culinary arts, sound, music, performance, nature, and things hard to classify have always found a welcome home at Transformer. Many Corcoran students and alumni, many more than represented in this catalogue, had their first post-college exhibition at Transformer. Many of our former students have worked as curators and programmers, and also as interns, office managers, and in various other roles.

Why is it that the students, faculty, and alumni of the Corcoran have shared such a close relationship to Transformer over these years? I would argue that it's not a matter of proximity, but rather a shared set of ideas about the role of art in contemporary life. I don't mean 'contemporary life' in the abstract sense, but *this* contemporary life that unfolds during *this* particular time in *this* particular place. Transformer, like the Corcoran College of Art +

Design, chooses possibility over predictability. This is probably why Transformer has always seemed to be as much a laboratory or classroom as a gallery exhibition space. In fact, it's all three. If we had a metric for measuring artistic energy per square foot, Transformer might be one of the most efficient and productive arts organizations anywhere.

I'll end these comments by bringing it back to EF Schumacher: "The best aid to give is intellectual aid, a gift of useful knowledge. A gift of knowledge is infinitely preferable to a gift of material things." This statement surely speaks for itself; it needs no unpacking. Art is useful knowledge. Art is intellectual aid. Transformer surely understands this, as does the Corcoran College of Art + Design. We at the Corcoran owe a significant debt to the work of Victoria Reis and her staff as Transformer begins its second decade.

Casey Smith
Corcoran Professor,
Advisory Council Member: Transformer

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GRADUATED 2006 | FINE ART

Transformer exhibitions: *E7 Tetrad*, 2010 |
ALPTRAUM!, 2010–2012 | *Sketch*, 2011

Born in Mamadzou, Mayotte, Reuben received his BFA from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in 2006. He uses art as a tool to investigate transitional states of mind, body, and the environment. He currently is part of Transformer's internationally touring *ALPTRAUM!* exhibition. Breslar's work is inspired by the history of visual culture and the personal connection we share with it and each other. Reuben's body of work includes drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, installation, and happenings.



Time Machine | 2011 | installation: two drum equipment cymbal stands, two 4' fluorescent lights, 12 gauge electrical cord, one surge protector, twine, and a 1 x 4' mirror | approximately 6 x 6 x 2 feet / reubenbreslar.com

REUBEN BRESLAR

BRECK OMAR BRUNSON



The Throne Theory | 2011 | Douglas fir | variable

GRADUATED 2002 | FINE ART

Transformer exhibitions: *The Relationship Show*, 2006
Long Distance Relationship, 2006 | *Give & Take/*
Da y Toma, 2009

Born in the Northeastern United States to Southern parents, Breck Omar Brunson received a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in Washington, DC. He has since shown with 21, DC; Barn Barnacles, DC; Civilian Art Projects, DC; Curator's office, DC; Fusebox, DC; Garash Galeria, MX; Gasp, Boston; Meat Market Gallery, DC; NWAA, DE; Panhwa, DC; Pass Gallery, DC; Transformer, DC; Your Last Neighbor, DC and Vogt Gallery, NY. He has also shown in popular art fairs such as Aqua Miami, Art Chicago, Scope Miami, and Scope NY. Brunson butts suggestive imagery to compose new abstract designer allegory.



Unfurling dawn of time | 2011 | cardboard, paper, plaster, acrylic | 11 X 7 X 13 inches / jessicacebra.tumblr.com

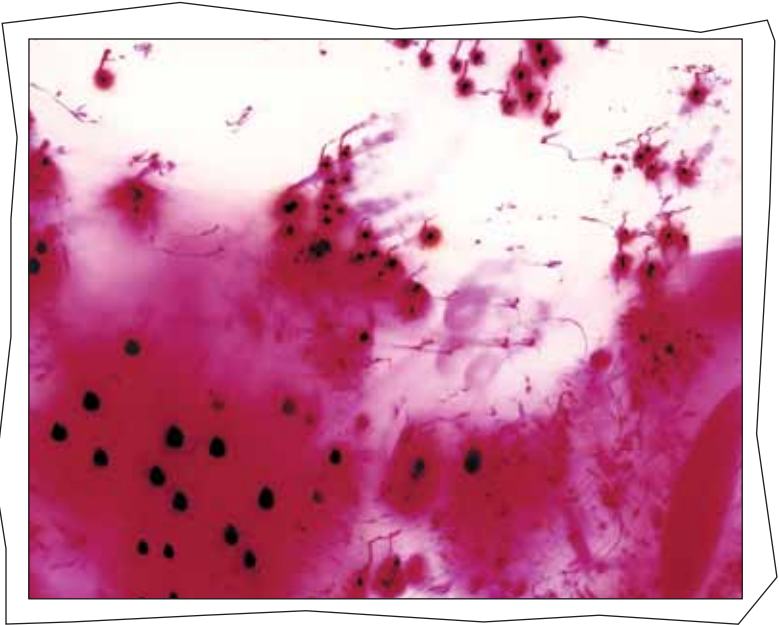
GRADUATED 2006 | PHOTOGRAPHY

Transformer exhibitions: *Natural (dis)Order*, 2007 | *Paper Trail*, 2008–2009 | *Snow Globe*, 2010 | *ALPTRAUMI*, 2010–2012 | (e)merge art fair, 2011

Born in California, Jess received her BFA in photography from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in 2006, and lives in DC. Drawn from her previous 2D collage work, her fascination with natural structures and surfaces is combined with man-made ideals of beauty and power, presented through the aesthetics of high-end advertising, and low-priced opulence. Seemingly anonymous, the architecture memorializes a demolished building. The crystallizing cavern stands as an adorned ruin of empty allure. The presence of the hand in the construction demands authenticity, yet wavers amongst the sophisticated structures which only nature can simulate.

JESSICA CEBRA

NATALIE W. CHEUNG



Untitled | 2011 | color pinhole Lambda | 30 X 38 inches / nataliewcheung.com

GRADUATED 2008 | PHOTOGRAPHY

Transformer exhibitions: *wall/paper*, 2007–2008 | *Paper Trail*, 2008–2009 | *ALPTRAUM!*, 2010–2012

Born in Virginia, Natalie received her BFA in photography from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in 2008, and her MFA in 2010 from Tyler School of Art, Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. Cheung's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and appears in the collection of the British Council as well as the Museum of Fine Art Houston. Inspired by the rich history of the photographic medium, Cheung approaches photography in an experimental fashion utilizing camera-less photography. Her work focuses on chance happenings, and the push and pull between the micro- and macrocosm.



Nevada Intersection | gelatin silver prints | 17 5/8 X 31 5/8 inches / cynthiaconnolly.com

GRADUATED 1985 | GRAPHIC DESIGN

Transformer exhibitions: *Book*, 2002 | *Cynthia Connolly Photgs*, 2005 | *wall/paper*, 2007–2008 | *Summer Camp*, 2009 | *Sustainability Lab*, 2010

Cynthia Connolly was born in Los Angeles, and grew up in Washington, DC where she attended the Corcoran College of Art + Design (BFA in Graphic Design 1985). In 2003 she received a certificate from Auburn University's design/build architecture program The Rural Studio. A prolific artist who has exhibited internationally, she is known for works in the *Beautiful Losers* exhibit, the book *Banned in DC*, her post cards, and her curatorial work at DC Space, the Ellipse Arts Center, and Artisphere. Her photography is in many private collections as well as the Smithsonian Museum of American History and the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Her art connects disparate places, people and things.

CYNTHIA CONNOLLY

NILAY LAWSON



Untitled | 2011 | graphite with acrylic on canvas board | 8 X 10 inches / garashgaleria.com

GRADUATED 2002 | FINE ART

Transformer exhibitions: *The Relationship Show*, 2006 | *Long Distance Relationship*, 2006 | *If You Didn't Know What This Was, Would You Know What This Is?*, 2008 | *Give & Take/Da y Toma*, 2009

Richard Pryor was burned. Nilay Lawson was born. Then John Lennon was shot. In 2002 she earned a BFA from the Corcoran College of Art + Design. With support from Transformer in DC, and representation from Garash Galeria in DF, Nilay Lawson has exhibited her work nationally and internationally in public and private spaces. She trajects the improvisations found in urban public space; its people and objects produce the ingredients of her expression. Nilay's paintings are a template for her to recreate encounters from memory. Documented street intersections are reflections of social dichotomies she notices, while appropriated street objects are playful discoveries synonymous with her child-like adaptability. Bridging the gap between art and daily interactions, Nilay solves art as commodity while producing continuity between all forms of her expression.



Rafa Cuevas in his studio | 2011 | chromogenic print | 16 X 24 inches / hatnimlee.com

GRADUATED 2005 | PHOTOGRAPHY

Transformer exhibitions: *Hatnim Lee Photographs*, 2008

Hatnim Lee received a BFA in photography from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in 2005. Her work has been shown worldwide. She is currently curating a show in NYC, working on her third book, & relocating to London in late 2011. The piece submitted for *transformers* is a portrait of a friend in Mexico City. It explores the struggle of balancing one's ego.

MARISSA LONG



Fake Food | 2011 | c-print | 16 X 20 inches / marissalong.com

GRADUATED 2006 | PHOTOGRAPHY

Transformer exhibitions: *dis/connected*, 2006 | *wall/paper*, 2007–2008 | *ALPTRAUMI*, 2010–2012

Originally from Pennsylvania, Marissa received her BFA from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in 2006. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, and is held in various private collections. The photograph included in the *transformers* exhibition is from an ongoing project currently titled *Fake Can Be Just As Good*, in which portraits, landscapes, and still lifes undulate between varying levels of clarity, confusion, and obstruction. Her photographs often prompt the viewer to consider his/her perception of the image and both its real and implied surfaces. Marissa currently lives and works in Washington, DC.



Slough (beast) | 2011 | ink on paper | 26 x 44 inches / makimaruyama.com

GRADUATED 2005 | FINE ART

Transformer exhibitions: *Little Creatures*, 2006 | *wall/paper*, 2007–2008 | *ALPTRAUMI*, 2010–2012

Born in Japan, Maki Maruyama spent his youth exploring and discovering cultural diversity and the absurdity of being a son of a Japanese father and an American mother. After moving to the US, he found his passion in art. He graduated from Corcoran College of Art + Design in 2005, and now he creates works influenced by both cultures.

JENNIFER DE PALMA

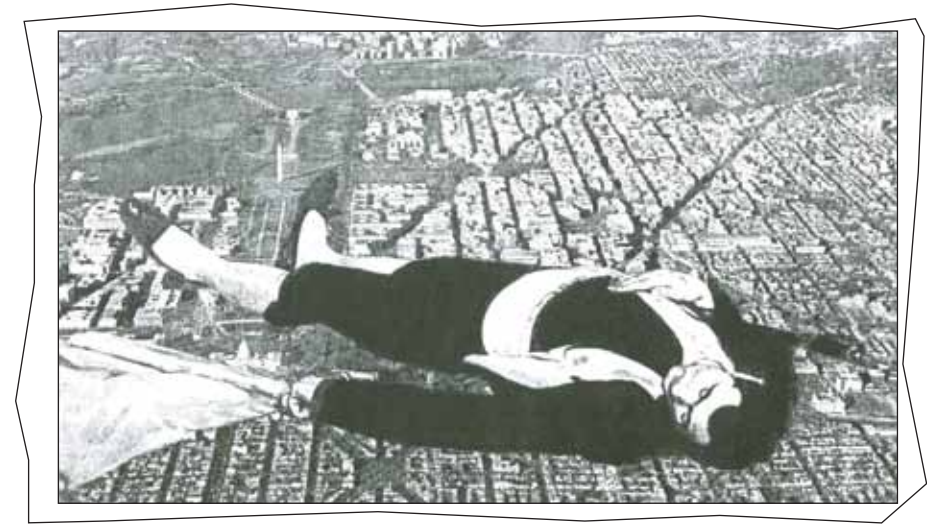


Untitled, (detail) | 2011 | acrylic and graphite on paper

GRADUATED 2006 | FINE ART

Transformer exhibitions: *Paper Trail*, 2008–2009 | *E7 Tetrad*, 2010

Jenn DePalma was born in Virginia in 1984 and earned her BFA from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in 2006. DePalma was a founding member of the defunct D'Steel(e) Society for Advanced Poetics, and is half of the art collaborative YAY team. In 2010, she participated in Transformer's seventh annual *Exercises for Emerging Artists* program. Her drawings are representations of still lifes, twisted slightly towards abstraction by the shifting of one or more details like scale, perspective, and color. These works in series manifest the need for parameters that become as important to the final interpretation as the source and its manipulation.



Reflect | 2011 | mixed media | 17 X 27 inches

GRADUATED 2002 | FINE ART

Transformer exhibitions: *The Relationship Show*, 2006 | *Long Distance Relationship*, 2006 | *Give & Take/Da y Toma*, 2009

Solomon Sanchez was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin in 1977. He studied at the Corcoran College of Art + Design from 1998 to 2002, focusing on sculpture. Over the past decade he has worked in many areas of art presentation, from conservator to curator. Simultaneously he has participated in a handful of group shows, most of which have been outside of DC, specific to time and place. He currently works for the UAE Embassy's Cultural Division in Public Relations, and moonlights DJing at many of DC's nightclubs.

Solomon sees art as a form of communication, using symbolism, juxtapositions, and humor to create a conversational apparatus. He is somewhere between a dadaist and a situationist with a minimalist's sense of aesthetics. He operates as a contemporary anthropologist, underhandedly poking fun at humanity's relationship with invention.

SOLOMON SANCHEZ

MICA SCALIN



These boots were made for walking to the beat of a different drummer | 2011 | video / micawave.tv

GRADUATED 1999 | PHOTOGRAPHY

Transformer exhibitions: *Mica and Misaki*, 2002

Mica Scalin is an artist and filmmaker working in New York. She has helped make documentaries on marriage equality (*Same Sex America*, 2006), female tap dancers (*Thinking on Their Feet*, 2010) and mermaids (*Mermaids of New York*, 2011). Mica earned a BFA in photography from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in 1999. She is proud to have been included in the very first exhibit at Transformer.

GRADUATED 2005 | FINE ART

Transformer exhibitions: *Snow Globe*, 2010 | *ALP-TRAUMI*, 2010–2012

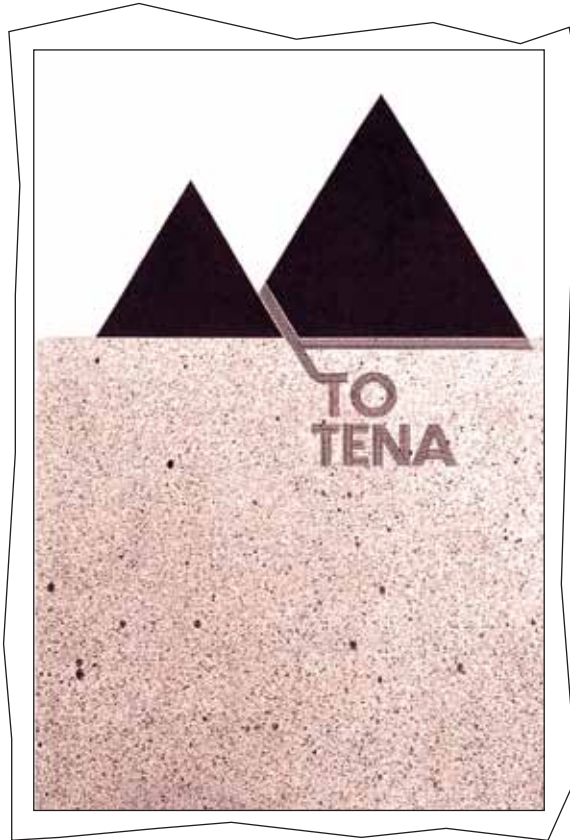
Zach Storm was born in Los Angeles, California. He received his BFA from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in Washington, DC in 2005. Storm's artwork has been exhibited in galleries throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. Storm comes from a family of Jewish actors and circus entertainers, and his drawings are heavily influenced by the motion picture industry and the freaky side of life.



Untitled 2 | 2011 | color pencil on paper | 22 X 30 inches / zachstorm.com

ZACH STORM

TANG



To Tena | 2011 | mixed media installation | 6 X 6 feet

GRADUATED 2004 | FINE ART

Transformer exhibitions: *Natural (dis)Order*, 2007
 | *Paper Trail*, 2008–2009 | *Give & Take/Day Toma*, 2009 | *Tang: Freedom & Its Owner*, 2010 | *ALPTRAUMI*, 2010–2012

Born in Bangkok, Thailand, Tang immigrated to the United States in the early 90's. He received his BFA in Fine Art from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in 2004. Tang also attended a summer program at the Skopelos Foundation for the Arts in Skopelos Island, Greece in 2003, which inspired him to travel and create artwork. Tang's work has been exhibited in multiple art spaces in the Washington, DC area. He also exhibited in Mexico City, Mexico at Garash Galeria as part of Transformers 2009 *Give and Take/Day Toma* exhibition.



All that Glitters (still from video-detail) | 2011 | single-channel video / jasonzimmerman.info

GRADUATED 2003 | PHOTOGRAPHY

Transformer exhibitions: *Fair Game*, 2005

Jason Zimmerman (b.1978, Ephrata, PA) completed his undergraduate studies in photography at the Corcoran College of Art + Design in 2003, and went on to receive a Masters in contemporary art practices at Portland State University specializing in socially based practices in 2011. His interdisciplinary projects have been featured in one-person and group exhibitions at the UCLA Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, the Portland Museum of Art in Portland, the Corcoran Gallery of Art and Civilian Art Projects in Washington D.C., Project Row Houses in Houston, Lump Projects in Raleigh, and Apexart and Smackmellon in New York.


JASON ZIMMERMAN

the transformers next generation

September 10 – October 22, 2011

Transformer

1404 P Street NW | Washington, DC 20005
www.transformergallery.org | (202) 483-1102

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Reclaimed Window (Rubbish, Trash, Debris) | 2011 | digital animation loop | 00:01:05 minutes / cargocollective.com/extrabbq

GRADUATED 2011 | FINE ART

Forest forages for and collects findings and things left behind to show and tell in his artworks. Just like walking the beach in search of sea shells, Forest has plucked the brightly colored bits of plastic, glass, metal or Styrofoam that line the alley behind his home. These objects, such as bottle caps, crumpled up aluminum wrappers, and packing peanuts glow like gems nestled in the leaves or stranded on the concrete. Birds such as the Magpie of the crow family collect the very same shiny bits of trash to decorate their nest when attracting a mate. This artwork speaks to that notion of trash or treasure and literally constructs a sacred vision through the operation and architecture of the stained glass window.

FOREST ALLREAD

transformers
the next generation

PAVLOS KARALIS



Revere Beach | 2011 | archival inkjet print | 24 X 21 inches / pavloskaralis.tumblr.com

GRADUATED 2011 | PHOTOGRAPHY

Pavlos Karalis is a Washington, DC native and recent graduate of the Corcoran College of Art + Design, where he majored in Fine Art Photography. While there, his imagery began to take on a constructive nature through the use of collage, lighting, miniatures, and a dense layering of surfaces. This interwoven style is further applied to Pavlos' growing interest in narrative, as his subject matter often dives into the realm of visual archetypes which have become recognizable over generations of theatre, performance, and storytelling.

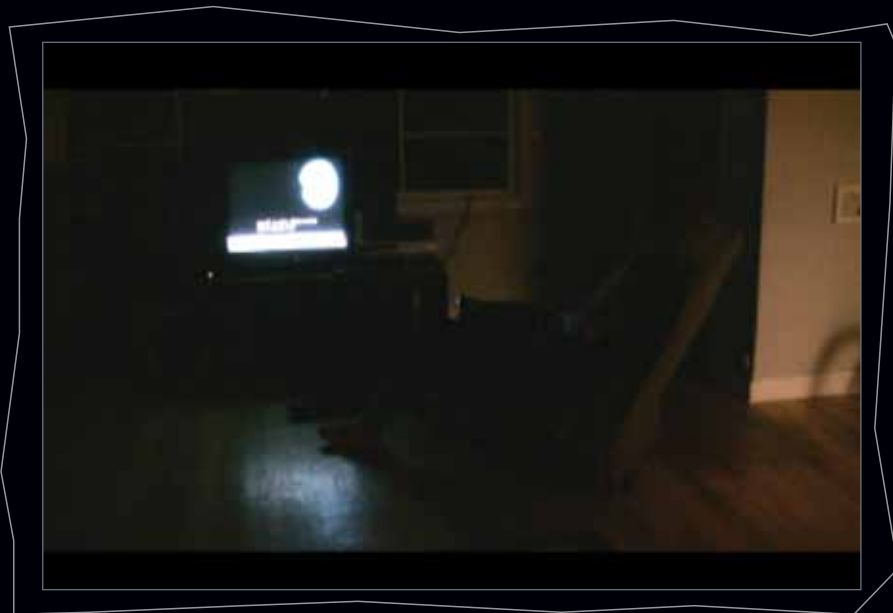


Crop Circles in the Carpet | 2011 | acrylic on wood | 22 X 40 inches / sarahrobbins.info

GRADUATED 2011 | FINE ART

Born in Rochester, New York, Sarah received her BFA in Fine Art from the Corcoran College of Art + Design. She is primarily a painter, but sometimes incorporates sculpture, photography, and installations in her work. Inspired by cinema, photography, and her surroundings, Sarah paints a fragmented world of the uncanny in American suburban life. Her work catches slivers in time, the moments in between moments.

ARIS SLATER



Nature Enthusiast | 2011 | digital video: looping dvd / aristaslater.com

GRADUATED 2011 | PHOTOGRAPHY

Born in Michigan, Aris received her BFA in photography from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in the spring of 2011. In fall 2011, she is pursuing her MFA in photography at the Art Institute of Boston. Her work has been exhibited at the Corcoran and Tyler School of Art student galleries. Inspired by history, sex, altercations, watching, and by the perceived incorrect usage of words, feelings and ideas, Aris is driven to conceive the unknown. She is also extremely interested in the connection of historic photographic processes and digital media.

GRADUATED 2011 | FINE ART

Victoria was born in a small beach town in New Jersey. She received her BFA from The Corcoran College of Art + Design in Washington, DC in 2011. Through installation, Victoria's work explores traditional stereotypes of art and function in a medium like ceramics. Victoria's work has been reviewed in numerous online zines, as well as in *The Washington Post*. In fall 2011 she will be attending the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan to pursue her MFA in ceramics.



YEAH RIGHT! | 2011 | stoneware, underglaze, high fire celadon | various sizes / victoria.shaheen.me/statement.html

VICTORIA SHAHEEN

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1404 P Street NW | Washington, DC 20005
www.transformergallery.org | (202) 483-1102

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 2011/2012 exhibition series and programs are supported by: The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The CrossCurrents Foundation, The Robert Lehman 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.



CORCORAN
GALLERY OF ART • COLLEGE of ART + DESIGN

500 Seventeenth Street NW | Washington, DC 20009
www.corcoran.edu | (202) 639-1800

Gallery 31 is the Corcoran's dedicated exhibition space for the Corcoran College of Art + Design. The space hosts exhibitions by the Corcoran's students, alumni, faculty, and visiting artists. The name was selected by the students, referring to the area's previous designation as "Room 31" in original Corcoran plans. Located at the New York Avenue entrance of the Corcoran, Gallery 31 is open during Gallery hours and is free to the public.