

transformer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TRANSFORMER presents:

Cynthia Connolly Photgs.

April 2 – May 7, 2005



**OPENING RECEPTION:
Saturday, April 2, 2005, 7-9 pm**

**ARTIST TALK:
Saturday, April 16, 2005, 2 pm**

Transformer is excited to present Cynthia Connolly in her first Washington, D.C. solo exhibition, *Cynthia Connolly Photgs.* - an installation of photographs, found objects, and handmade works on paper detailing her recent experience in West Alabama. Featuring an extensive array of black and white and color photographs, Connolly documents a world full of drastic contrasts: poverty and excessiveness, desperation and love, and the lush, rugged landscape that is the backdrop for an American community that is unknown to most outsiders.

Connolly's work focuses on documenting things or people leaving or changing, reminding us of what once was and what may soon disappear. Often her photographs document ready-made art existing in the world such as iceboxes, phone booths, and roadside signage. Her work documents true and unique American landscapes that appear to be on the brink of extinction. As a 2002/03 participant in the Rural Studio Program of Auburn University, Newbern, Alabama, Connolly spent more than a year living in Alabama extensively exploring several of the states two poorest counties, Hale and Perry. Connolly's photographs provide a peep-hole into a place and way of living that seem to have been forgotten or left behind, documenting a starkness and disparateness that is real and still exists in one of the world's richest countries.

"As I explored this area, I felt like I was stepping side ways through the past. This is a place ignored by most, especially corporate America, because there is little reason to advertise and sell in these primarily poor regions. I realized that people lived with bare necessities – food, light, water, gas, car, and shelter. There were no shopping malls, no luxury. Due to a lack of ownership of land or material things, people made room in their lives for rejoicing in the interaction of people through conversation, storefront or porch sitting, and sharing of food. As I became more of a 'local' (though I never could be really, as I am a Northerner), I felt that these places and people needed to be documented. "

The second artist to be presented in Transformer's D.C. based artists' solo exhibition series, Cynthia Connolly moved to D.C. from Los Angeles in 1981 at the age of sixteen. She

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received her BFA in Graphic Design from the Corcoran College of Art in 1985. Cynthia's artistic and photographic style is highly influenced by the early D.C. punk scene. In 1988 she published *Banned in DC*, a collection of stories and photographs that has sold over 13,000 copies. In 1993 she started avidly pursuing photography documenting the project "DC Musicians With Their Cars" for Speed Kills magazine. Connolly has taught herself most of the rudiments of color and black and white photography, and has applied this same "do it yourself" aesthetic to the presentation of her work, often exhibiting in non-traditional spaces.

A key staff member of Dischord Records from 1988 – 2002, Connolly started touring her artwork in a similar fashion to musicians. From 1997-2000 she and photographer Pat Graham collaborated on a series of ongoing art tours exhibiting work nationally and internationally. In 2003, Connolly received an Alabama State Council on the Arts / National Endowment for the Arts Grant for her work in the Rural Studio Program. Following her experience with the Rural Studio Program, Cynthia moved back to the D.C. area to become Director of The Ellipse Art Center in Arlington, VA. In March 2004, Connolly's photographs were included in the *Beautiful Losers* exhibition which opened at the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati, OH and continued on to the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, CA and will tour until 2009. The show has received many positive reviews, including a review in the January 2005 issue of *Art in America*.

Exhibition Hours for Cynthia Connolly Photgs.: 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 2004/2005 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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