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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 18, 2014

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Atmosphere March 29 – May 3, 2014

Opening Reception:
Saturday, March 29, 6-8pm

Artist Talk:
Saturday, April 12, 3pm

How to be a Professional Amateur
Workshop with Paul Shortt
Saturday, April 26, 2-4pm
Northeast Public Library
330 7th St NE, Washington, DC



Through photography, video and painting, artists **Chandi Kelley**, **Stephanie Kwak**, **Paul Shortt** and **Zach Storm** share impressions of Beijing, China as experienced via a two-week visit summer 2013, organized and funded by Transformer via support from the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities' *Sister Cities International Art Grant*.

During their time in Beijing, the artists presented a series of creative and educational panels and workshops at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art. In tandem with that, they visited galleries throughout the 798 Art District, spent July 4th with Ai WeiWei and cats at his studio, and toured The Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, The Great Wall, The Summer Palace, the Panjiayun Antique Market, and the Llama, Confucius, and Dongyue Temples, among other experiences.

Throughout the visit, there was continuous reflection on 'atmosphere': the weather, air and smog; the dramatic cityscape and its feeling of congestion; and the mesh and clash of contemporary and ancient culture. With these reflections in mind, the artists were invited to create new work based on their time in Beijing. What results is an exhibition of thoughtful work that share the artists' sensibilities of DC's Sister City Beijing.

Chandi Kelley's work highlights the tension between fiction and documentation through constructed environments and the objects that inhabit them. In these environments, the natural world becomes a mere representation of itself - no longer the thing it was, but signifying its past. Facades of nature give the illusion of natural space, but only emphasize the longing that we feel for a wilderness untouched by mankind. Objects meant as stand-ins for nature underscore this detachment from the natural world. Regarding her photographic work in *Atmosphere*, Kelley states: "I was drawn to the emphasis of the landscape on tarps over construction sites or painted onto the sides of buildings, and objects artificially proclaiming nature. These images and objects felt familiar and distant, enhanced by the estrangement of an unknown place. I sought blurred lines between the real and the unreal and the points where these two worlds intersect."

With *smfoggy*, **Stephanie Kwak** highlights the combination of exhilaration & fatigue she experienced in Beijing. Kwak states: "*smfoggy* is a remix of a video that Chandi Kelley and I 'made' on a hot summer day in the tourist trap known as the Forbidden City. I was drawn to 'making' the original video because the two-minute blue-screened experience seemed to capture the humor, absurdity, as well as the brief rapture (or Rapture) of being a tourist in one of the biggest, and increasingly important and talked-about, cities of the world: Beijing. The original video is enough by itself, but I wanted to make a remix to distort & magnify its awkward whimsy. Through the use of repetition, layering, and fast cutting, I hope to match (or at least get close) to the frenetic pace of Beijing in my remixed video."

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Paul Shortt's *Smog* is a video that draws comparisons between the smog and pollution of Beijing and the rising tide of gentrification in Washington, DC. "In the video, a man is seen walking the streets of DC, wearing a facemask to protect himself from pollution as cars and people move past him. As the video progresses, it becomes clearer that he is walking just ahead of a continual stream of encroaching city construction," states Shortt. "As sister cities, Beijing and DC share not only the status of national capitals, but also that of cities that have been completely transformed by quick growth and development. *Smog* attempts to explore this growth and the ramifications of it through the simple act of strolling the city streets."

Blending elements of pure abstraction with phenomenological experience, **Zach Storm's** paintings are seductive, quick to appeal visually and slow to reveal themselves conceptually. "The body of work presented in *Atmosphere* focuses on the smog-filled skies of Beijing as viewed through the same hotel window everyday for eleven days," states Storm. "Repeated coats of acrylic urethane, pigments, inks and metal fleck build layers of information that light passes through after bouncing off of the aluminum surface below." Storm's paintings demand that the viewer shift position in relation to the statically installed work of art, in order to incorporate movement and the play of light into the aesthetic experience.

EXHIBITION HOURS: Wednesday-Saturday, 12-6pm and by appointment.

Additional *Atmosphere* Programming:

How to be a Professional Amateur - Presented by Paul Shortt

Saturday, April 26, 2-4pm

Northeast Public Library - 330 7th St NE, Washington, DC

FREE! ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED: <http://on.fb.me/1i8xaGu>

Transformer in collaboration with the DC Library Foundation presents a workshop led by Professional Artist and Amateur Paul Shortt, exploring the condition of being a professional through group exercises and activities. This workshop was presented in July 2013 at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art.

ARTIST BIOS:

Chandi Kelley graduated with a BFA in photography from the Corcoran College of Art and Design in 2004. She was the recipient of a Young Artist Grant from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities in 2009, which led to her first solo exhibition. She has presented her work at the NADA Art Fair in Miami, the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing, and is in the permanent collection of the U.S. Embassy in Malta as well as in private collections throughout the U.S. She is a Co-Founder and Administrator of the artwork subscription service, Project Dispatch, and Co-Founder of Outer Space. She has served on the Publishers Exhibition Committee for Fotoweeek DC, as Artist Nominator for the 2012 Transformer Auction at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and currently serves on the Visual Arts Committee and the Board of Directors at the DC Arts Center.

Stephanie Kwak received a Master of Arts in Communication at Georgetown University and a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature at Oberlin College. She lived and worked in Tokyo for two years as an Oberlin Shansi Fellow and has presented her work internationally at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing) and Van Abbemuseum (Netherlands). Stephanie is a member of Project Dispatch and is the Development & Communications Coordinator at Transformer.

Paul Shortt received his MFA in New Media Art from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and his BFA in Painting from the Kansas City Art Institute. He has been in numerous group shows in Chicago, Kansas City, Washington, DC, and New York City. His work seeks to engage the public in physical interactions and conversations that examine everyday experiences and cultural norms, often in humorous ways, through video, sculpture and performance. His videos have been shown at the Museum of the Moving Image, the Phillips Collection, and the Corcoran College of Art and Design. Shortt has spoken about his work at the Ullens Center For Contemporary Art In Beijing, China, and the Kemper

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Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri. Shortt is currently the Registry Coordinator for the Maryland State Arts Council's Artists' Registry and a Program Assistant at Maryland Art Place.

Zach Storm received his BFA from the Corcoran College of Art+Design in Washington, DC in 2005 and earned his Masters degree at the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2012. From a family of west coast engineers and car enthusiasts, Storm's work is heavily influenced by surface detail, objects of desire and spatial illusion. Storm's artwork has been exhibited in galleries throughout the United States, Europe and Japan.

Image: Chandi Kelley, *Gutter (as waterfall)*, archival inkjet print, 2014

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.

t r a n s f o r m e r's 2013/14 Exhibition Series and programs are 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 Bernstein Family Foundation, The Robert Lehman Foundation, The CrossCurrents Foundation, The S&R Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts' Access to Artistic Excellence Award, and The Visionary Friends of Transformer – individual donors, members of our Annual Auction Host Committee, and Corporate Sponsors.