

EXPLORING SOCIAL PRACTICE:

HOW TRANSFORMER'S E12 ARTISTS INTERPRETED
SOCIAL INTERVENTION MENTORSHIP FROM
DESIGN STUDIO FOR SOCIAL INTERVENTION

SEPTEMBER 24 – OCTOBER 22, 2015

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY KATZEN ARTS CENTER ROTUNDA

Do You Know
WHERE YOUR
ART
COMES FROM?

A collaboration between the Studio Art Program at American University, Transformer, and Design Studio for Social Intervention, *Exploring Social Practice* is the 2nd exhibition in Transformer's four-part *Do You Know Where Your Art Comes From?* series, being presented over two years at the American University Museum and the Rotunda of the Katzen Arts Center. Curated by Victoria Reis, Executive & Artistic Director of Transformer, in collaboration with Tim Doud, Associate Professor of Art and coordinator of the Visiting Artist Program at American University, *Do You Know Where Your Art Comes From?* highlights various contemporary platforms artists and arts organizations have initiated to develop, create, and present art, and investigates current and future models of art organizing.

Do You Know Where Your Art Comes From? is inspired by Common Field (www.commonfield.org) a new national arts network of arts organizer, artist projects, and non-profit and independent art spaces. Transformer and Design Studio for Social Intervention are Founding Members of Common Field.

EXPLORING SOCIAL PRACTICE SEEKS TO FURTHER CURRENT

contemporary art dialogue about and approaches to pursuing social interventions and social practice work. Sharing outcomes from *E12: Social Practice Labs* – the 12th year of Transformer’s *Exercises for Emerging Artists* peer critique & mentorship program supporting DC based emerging artists in their professional growth and creative development – *Exploring Social Practice* presents work by Amy Hughes Braden, Kunj, Joseph Orzal, and Margo Elsayd that embraces and interprets methods to social change and social engagement.

Beginning in late May 2015, the *E12: Social Practice* artists worked with Design Studio for Social Intervention Co-Founder Kenneth Bailey, to expand their understanding of cultural tactics used in social interventions, learn methodologies for exploring cultural contexts, develop relevant cultural symbols, and generate ideas that build on these symbols to create powerful social interventions. With this mentorship, and the additional mentorship support of E12 DC Lead Mentor artist Patrick McDonough, as well as Transformer curatorial staff, the *E12: Social Practice* artists developed creative social interventions incorporating a variety of design elements.

The *E12: Social Practice* artists engaged community in imaginative critical thinking through an ambitious series of comprehensive, ten-day long *Social Practice Labs* at Transformer. Employing a range of disciplines, including sculpture, painting, installation, performance, and conceptual formats, the artists created unique points of community engagement on issues of femininity, visibility, critical pedagogy, and urban planning. *Exploring Social Practice* presents photographic documentation of their artistic actions, as well as compelling design elements from their *Social Practice Labs* for further contemplation and engagement.

**AMY HUGHES BRADEN:
MRS. ALEX BRADEN**

Amy Hughes Braden's *Mrs. Alex Braden* explored topics of femininity and feminine constructs through community conversations and audience surveys, gleaned information from both sources as she asks the question 'what does it mean to be a feminist?'.



**JOSEPH ORZAL:
LIBERATION STATION**

Exploring topics of Freedom, Oppression, Race, Objectification, Liberation, Books, Seinfeld, Meditation and Leisure – Orzal hosted a series of programmatic conversations with community members via his *Liberation Station*.

"Liberation Station is an attempt, a pathetic attempt, but an attempt nonetheless: an attempted intervention into liberating its audience

of the internalized disciplinary mechanisms that gear us to pursue ruthless ambitions of individualistic success. Liberation Station offers a hammock instead. Please skip work and take a nap in it. Everyday. Until you're fired. Then start a new life." – Joseph Orzal

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. www.transformerdc.org



MARGO ELSAYD:
THE MOBILE COMMUNITY STOOP PROJECT

The Mobile Community Stoop is a 3-D sculptural stoop on wheels created by Margo Elsayd. Pushing the physical structure from place to place across the city, the artist brought together people from all backgrounds to engage with the stoop by sharing in conversation and storytelling.

KUNJ: VIS-I-BIL-I-TY

Engaging with audiences through a series of public actions, events and performances, Kunj explored topics of visibility, invisibility and hyper-visibility, while questioning the necessity of community-created 'safe-space', beginning with *Your Birthday*, an event examining hyper-visibility and birthday rituals.



All images courtesy of Transformer



The Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI) is dedicated to changing how social justice is imagined, developed and deployed in the United States. Creating a design studio for the progressive arm of the nonprofit sector to support the sector's ability to create new forms of effective social intervention and the exploration of new ways to be interventionists, DS4SI functions as a creativity lab for social justice work in the public sphere. www.ds4si.org

EXPLORING SOCIAL PRACTICE PUBLIC PROGRAMS

all programs take place within the
American University Katzen Arts Center Rotunda unless otherwise noted

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 6–8pm: OPENING RECEPTION

Join Transformer, American University, Design Studio for Social Intervention, and the *E12: Social Practice* Artists as we celebrate the opening of *Exploring Social Practice*. Beginning at 7pm, Lori Lobenstine, Co-Founder, Design Studio for Social Intervention will share remarks on making meaning and creating change in the public sphere through the integration of social justice strategies with art, design thinking, and social practice.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 6:30–8pm: WHAT IS SOCIAL PRACTICE?

A Conversation with Kenny Bailey, Co-Founder, Design Studio for Social Intervention & Patrick McDonough, Artist and Adjunct Professor, American University.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15:

OBENTO BOXING: PERSONAL TACTICS FOR SOCIAL PRACTICE

Afternoon Master Class: 2:30–4pm; Evening Master Class: 7–8:30pm

Location: Studio Room 246; 2nd Floor AU Katzen Arts Center Rotunda

Organize what's in your head, obento box style! Everything we do requires us to set up our own tools and systems for thinking and creating. Take the time to step out of your personal, artistic, social or daily practice to see, sort and share your tools and ingredients through these two Obento Boxing Master Classes led by Ayako Maruyama, Creativity Lab Design Lead, Design Studio for Social Intervention. Participants interested in a hands-on lab that takes light and delicious inspiration from Japanese washoku principles are welcome to join in a reflective exercise unlike any other. Feel free to bring a tool you use in your practice, however that prompt speaks to you.

EXHIBITION HOURS: SUNDAY–SATURDAY, 9am–5pm

transformer's 2015/16 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, SunTrust, 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.

The Studio Art Program at American University provides students with the tools to ambitiously engage historical and contemporary criteria for making art. American University offers MFA, BFA, and BA degrees in studio art. Our Visiting Artists Program augments the studio arts curriculum by bringing internationally recognized artists from around the country. For more information, please visit american.edu/auarts.

