

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Transformer Launches Siren Arts – An Innovative Summer Residency & Exhibition Program For Emerging Visual Artists

JUNE 24 – SEPTEMBER 23, 2017  
ASBURY PARK, NJ

Expanding our programs to support emerging visual artists and innovative contemporary art practices, Transformer is honored to announce the launch of **Siren Arts** – an annual summer residency & exhibition program based in Asbury Park, NJ.



Pursuing different formats & themes each summer, this inaugural program features a diverse mix of more than 12 participating artists invited to develop and create works that explore cultural, racial, sexual, and gender equality via short-term residency experiences. Operating out of a storefront exhibition space at 529 Bangs Avenue, in Asbury Park's historic business district located three blocks from the iconic Asbury Park Boardwalk and Atlantic Ocean, works in a variety of visual mediums will be presented via the exhibition *Summer of Radical Love*.

Centered within a site-specific installation by New York-based artist **J. Morrison**, with accompanying works by artists **Caroline Wells Chandler** and **Ramekon O'Arwisters** – both featured in the recently launched *Queer Threads: Crafting Identity and Community* coffee table book by **John Chaich** and **Todd Oldham** for AMMO Books – *Summer of Radical Love* will host an additional rotation of artists, new works, and events throughout the summer, including: limited edition multiples by DC-based art collective **NoMüNoMü**, drawings & prints by DC-based artist **Lisa Marie Thalhammer**, performance art events, and more. All programming is provided free of charge.

Siren Arts is a direct result of Transformer's successful 2014 pilot residency & exhibition *Promised Land* in Asbury Park, NJ, which brought together 12 east coast based emerging visual artists to pursue creative research related to the city's history and culture. Located in the middle of the northeast corridor of Washington, DC to NYC, Asbury Park is an iconic beach town known for its oceanfront, arts & music present and history, and unique Beaux-Art boardwalk architecture, hosting hundreds of thousands of visitors each summer. Supported by a special curatorial grant from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the *Promised Land* exhibition, presented in the 5th Avenue Pavilion of the Asbury Park boardwalk, highlighted a diversity of visual mediums including painting, video, installation, sculpture, performance art, sound art, and photography. Over its six-week presentation, the exhibition was visited by more than 5,000 audiences members, built substantial opportunities for the artists, and increased dialogue around new & best contemporary art practices.

### Siren Arts' Summer of Radical Love - Public Programs:

Saturday, June 24, 10 AM – 4 PM

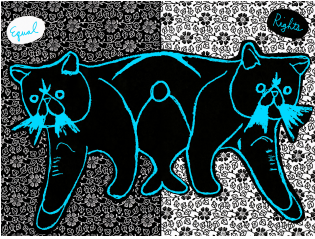
*Community Crochet Jam with Ramekon O'Arwisters*

Library Park: 500 1st Ave, Asbury Park, NJ

*Siren Arts' Summer of Radical Love* kicks off with a *Community Crochet Jam* led by visiting San Francisco based social practice artist **Ramekon O'Arwisters**. Presented through a curatorial collaboration with *Queer Threads* exhibition curators John Chaich and Icarus, *Crochet Jam* is a public art-making event that embraces community engagement and inclusivity. Intended to be a meditative, liberating, and empowering community program, *Crochet Jam* encourages the public to think differently about the role of art within community and the power of art within society. The Asbury Park Community *Crochet Jam* takes place as part of Asbury Park Day's *All Things Art in the Park* event. Everyone in the community is invited to participate. No prior crochet skills required. Materials will be provided. The work resulting from the *Crochet Jam* will be exhibited at Siren Arts' 529 Bangs Ave space, with community members invited to continue to build the piece throughout the summer.



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

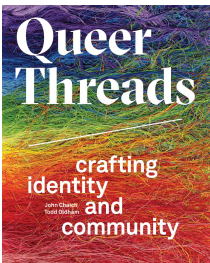


**Saturday, June 24, 6:30 - 9 PM**  
**Summer of Radical Love Opening Reception**  
**529 Bangs Avenue**

Audiences are invited to join Transformer at a special opening reception to celebrate Siren Arts inaugural exhibition *Summer of Radical Love*. Meet Transformer staff and the participating Siren Arts' artists and guest curators, and learn about this innovative work exploring cultural, racial, sexual, and gender equality.

**Saturday, July 15, noon-2pm**  
**Beach Blanket Stitch n' Bitch with *Queer Threads***  
**Asbury Park 5th Ave Beach**

Independent queer curators and craft enthusiasts John Chaich (*Queer Threads*) and Jeanne Vaccaro (*BYOB: Transgender between Archives and Aesthetics*) invite you to join them craft, chat, and celebrate queer creativity on the beach. Look for the granny-square afghan in the 'gay' end of the beach and BYOC: bring your own crafts! Follow @QueerThreads on Facebook and Instagram for details and related reading to consider.



**Saturday, July 15, 6-8pm**  
**Queer Threads Curator Talk & Book Signing**  
**529 Bangs Ave**

Independent Curator John Chaich shares highlights from the traveling exhibition and coffee table book, *Queer Threads: Crafting Identity and Community*. In this informal talk, he'll discuss the connections between identity, language, and materiality in his curatorial projects. A book signing will follow.

**Saturday, July 29, 6-9pm**  
**NoMüNoMü Artists' Reception & Performances**  
**529 Bangs Ave**

Siren Arts introduces a series of new limited edition multiples created by **NoMüNoMü**, a DC based arts collaborative dedicated to creating new spaces for alternative articulations of art, based primarily on the idea that art should be a collaborative, educational, and at the very least fun cultural exercise that always looks to challenge and critique the status quo. Founded by artists Joseph Orzal and Nora Müller, NoMüNoMü engages a diverse selection of artists that cuts through divisions of race, age, gender and orientation, to create projects that push audiences and dialogues towards a truer understanding of arts intersectionality, so as to transform the contemporary arts field entirely.



**EXHIBITION HOURS:** Thursday – Saturday, 1-7pm, and by appointment. Additional Public Programs will be announced in mid-July 2017. Visit <http://transformerdc.org/programs/sirenarts> throughout the summer for updates and additional details.

Images: *Christmas in July*, 2015, Caroline Wells Chandler; *Crochet Jam* detail 2016, Ramekon O'Arwisters; *Equal Rights*, 2014, J. Morrison; John Chaich (Melissa Blackall Photography); Jeanne Vaccaro; *Queer Threads* cover 2017

**t r a n s f o r m e r** is a Washington, DC based 501 (c) 3 non-profit, artist-centered 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 a diverse range of innovative exhibition and program partnerships. **t r a n s f o r m e r**'s 2017/18 Exhibition Series and programs are supported by: The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Metabolic Studios, The CrossCurrents Foundation, The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities/NEA, Philip L. Graham Fund, The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts' Access to Artistic Excellence Award, SunTrust, and The Visionary Friends of Transformer.