

## transformer

is a non-profit alternative art space founded by curators and art organizers Victoria Reis and Jayme McLellan. Transformer seeks to connect and promote emerging artists through high quality, professional exhibitions and workshops, while providing much needed mentoring and peer-networking among local, national, and international artists. Partnering with artists, curators, alternative non-profit and independent art spaces, as well as commercial galleries, museums and other cultural institutions, Transformer serves as a catalyst and an advocate for emergent expression in the visual arts.

Transformer is supported through contributions from its Board and Advisory Council, generous friends, and select foundations.

The BOOK exhibition has been made possible through the generous contributions of talent, skills and labor by the participating BOOK artists, presses, zines and our friends: Ken Ashton, Jerry Busher, James Canty, Dischord Records, Helen Frederick, Fusebox, Jason Gubiotti, James Huckenphaler, Laris Kreslins, Kate Lydon, Mimi Masse, John McCahill, and all those who attended our recent French Toast benefit.

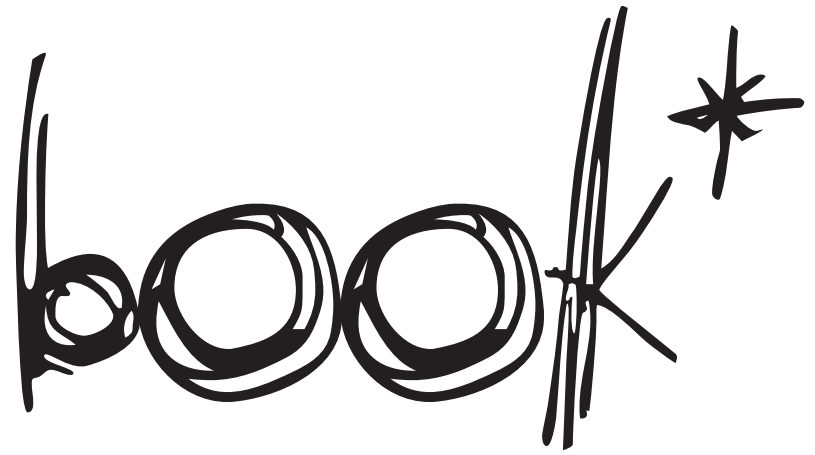
Gallery hours are Thursday and Friday from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.  
Saturday from 1-6 pm or by appointment.

For more information please call 202.544.4668.

Transformer is in the process of launching its website:

**WWW.TRANSFORMERGALLERY.ORG**

transformer  
1404 P Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005



Ken Ashton  
Carol Beane & Michael Platt  
Cynthia Connolly  
Stephen Gibson  
Sara Greenberger  
Lida Husik  
Amanda Kleinman  
Stephen E. Lewis  
Norma Fong Lydon  
\*

Horse & Buggy Press  
Hot Iron Press  
\*

Dog headed boy Comix  
Double Negative  
Fret  
Mobile City  
\*

Zine Archives from  
Dischord Records  
Sound Collector

# artists' books, book art, sculptural bookworks, and zines

Transformer's third exhibition **BOOK (SEPTEMBER 14 - OCTOBER 19)** provides a sampling of work by artists exploring the rich genre of art expressed through book and magazine form. Defined by the artist visionaries who founded New York based non-profit artist-organization Printed Matter as "artwork for the page", the artist book medium is an accessible art form that applies visual techniques and structural invention to original texts and experimental materials.

Inspired by the work of Futurists, Dadaists, and the Fluxus group, artist books and zines are sites for a range of concerns or sensibilities to be expressed and communicated, be they personal, social or political. With total control over the end product, artist made publications provide a self contained "alternative space" for the presentation of artwork and artistic concepts. While wildly different, they often incorporate materials that are tactile and usually relating to the metaphor of the text. In the absence of text, the images and structure are the content that create important links in the transmission and exchange of ideas.

Featuring examples such as flip-books, journals, graphic novels, photo books, and comics, along with accordion fold, multi-fold, bound and/or unbound volumes - the creations in **BOOK** involve the reader actively in the viewing process. We see not only words on a page, but also how the words, pictures, and physical form of the objects all contribute to their meanings.

## programs

Transformer has organized several ancillary programs throughout September and October in conjunction with **BOOK** including:

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, NOON-7 PM** An all day visit by projet Mobilivre/BookMobile project. Projet Mobilivre/BookMobile project is a touring exhibition of artist books, zines, and independent publications. The projet Mobilivre/ BookMobile project mission is to improve exposure for self-made bookworks, and to encourage artistic production through bookbinding workshops and informal dialogue. The **BOOKMOBILE** travels across the United States and Canada in a vintage AirStream trailer, visiting a variety of communities, seeking to strengthen pre-existing networks and inspire new connections between artists, writers, and those concerned with the survival of independent media.

Please stop by Transformer between noon and 7pm on September 24 and welcome the **BOOKMOBILE** volunteers. They will be parked out front of the gallery on P Street and the AirStream will be open to the public. Workshops and talks will take place throughout the day.

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 7-8 PM** A talk with **BOOK** artists Michael Platt and Carol Beane on the development of their first collaborative project, *forgotten contours*, featured in the Transformer **BOOK** exhibition.

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 6:30-8PM** A slide presentation and talk on letterpress operations by Dave Wofford, Founder, Horse & Buggy Press and a poetry reading with participating **BOOK** artist Stephen Gibson.

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 3-4PM** A talk on book conservation with **BOOK** artist and paper conservator Lida Husik.

(excluding poetry!). Jeff's second goal was to create some sort of positive effect with the magazine - that could include inspiring people with ideas, motivating them to be creative as well, or simply sharing information and positive thoughts. The zine started off as a small 5.5" x 8.5" folded, photocopied zine that was put together with scissors and glue sticks. As the years went by, Jeff invested in a computer and started producing the whole thing on a computer. The size went to half-legal and then to full letter size, as it is now. He also switched to having the zine offset printed, and recently has been screen-printing the covers.

"I started putting together Double Negative when I was a freshman in college. I had been inspired by other zines I saw while growing up - including my friend's skate zine, Media Locals, and another local zine called Wonder Rolling News. I knew I wanted to contribute something to the scene, so I just started to assemble artwork and writing by friends of mine. When I moved to Boston to study writing at Emerson College, I took the zine with me. I worked as a bike messenger for a couple years and that was a great source of stories and inspiration. Now I'm back in Philadelphia and I spend most of my time at Space 1026 ([www.space1026.com](http://www.space1026.com)), an artists' collective that has studios, screen-printing, a computer lab and a gallery with monthly shows."

Double Negative is currently distributed by Tower Records and Desert Moon Distribution. For more information on the zine, check out [www.doublenegative.org](http://www.doublenegative.org).

**FRET**, a lifestyle and humor zine, was created as a response to an increasingly homogenized gay male culture and its generic, uninspired mainstream publications. Fret Magazine and its Web counterpart, [Fretmag.com](http://Fretmag.com), aim to provide a forum for alternative gay culture, featuring articles and commentary on art, music, random cultural phenomena, and anything else that creates the embodiment of the fretful gay lad.

**MOBILE CITY** The first issue of Mobile City was published in Washington, DC 1996. James Kerns and Stephen Gibson had met while working as bicycle messengers, and soon discovered that they shared an interest in the arts, as did many of their colleagues. They caged a few poems, photos, and drawings from friends, and laid out the first issue of Mobile City after-hours in an architect's office on K Street. This first issue was laid by hand in Dupont Circle and dimly lit bar rooms across DC as well as through friends in San Francisco, Seattle, and New York. While Mobile City began as a messenger 'zine, it has grown into an urban arts and literary magazine with a range of contributors that spans from courier alleycat luminaries to NEA award winners and poets whose work has appeared in the Pushcart Prize and Best American Poetry anthologies.

Since its inception, Mobile City has been written up in USA Today, the Washington Post, the City Paper, and Spokes Magazine. In February 1999, NPR's Morning Edition aired a feature story about Mobile City called "Bards on Bikes." In 2000, Assouline Press used text provided by Mobile City contributors for its fashion photography book, *Messengers Style*.

Mobile City can be found online at [www.mobilecity.com](http://www.mobilecity.com) and is part of the permanent collection at the Poets House (72 Spring Street, New York, NY 10012).

zine archive  
collections

Transformer is honored to be exhibiting extensive collections of zines from the archives of both Dischord Records and the personal collection of Sound Collector publisher Laris Kreslins.

**DISCHORD RECORDS** is an independent record label based in Washington, DC. Dischord Records, as quoted on their website [www.dischord.com](http://www.dischord.com), "was created in 1980 to document the music coming out of the Washington, D.C. punk community. The label has put out the work of over 40 bands, and has distributed hundreds of other releases connected to the D.C. area. We will continue our work as long as this community continues to create music that speaks to us. Thanks."

**SOUND COLLECTOR**, as quoted by its editor and published Laris Kreslins in *Sound Collector #7*, is "A vicious hobby. Trying to balance the practical with the ideal is the goal. It's rarely that easy. Everyone has an opinion. A criticism. A reason. The reason for Sound Collector is to provide space for a voice. Rule one is to tap the voice of passion. Incorporating a voice with little or no outlet while simultaneously reevaluating the common, the heard. Ultimate goal: to trick people into discovering new elements of the everyday."

artists

**KEN ASHTON** is a photographer who has exhibited extensively in Washington, DC and abroad. His work has been featured in: *Reflections in Black*, Smithsonian Center for African American History & Culture, February - April 2000; *DB Landscapes*, Goethe Institute, Washington, DC February-March, 2002; *ALONE IN PARIS*, District Fine Arts, October 1999; and *black,white,beautiful*, Hemphill Fine Arts, July - August, 1999. His work is also in the collections of The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Museum of Contemporary Photography, and The Washington Post. He received his BFA in 1986 from James Madison University and is currently Museum Technician for Works on Paper at The Corcoran Gallery of Art.

"These two books (in the Transformer BOOK exhibit) are off shoots of the two series I worked on in 1993. *Investigating Neighborhoods in the District of Columbia 1993*, was a look at the areas in DC east of the park that have been the strong holds of the long standing residents of this city. *Leesburg 1993*, is a collection of images from my family's home town. I made the images for my parents and made the books for everyone else in my family."

**CAROL A. BEANE AND MICHAEL B. PLATT** Carol Beane, born in New York city, grew up in Michigan, claims California as home along with Washington, DC. Schooled at U. C. Berkeley, she has always loved languages and art and has always written poetry. She teaches Spanish and Interpretation at Howard University.

Ms. Beane lists the following as her major highlights as a poet: Translating poems from Spanish at an event commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39); honoring the members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade; doing a bi-lingual reading with the Spanish poet of the Generation of Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, who had read poetry in the trenches during that war.

Michael Platt was born in Washington, DC. Studied at Columbus College of Art and Design, BFA in 1970. He attended Howard University and received his MFA in 1973. He was represented by the Franz Bader gallery in Washington, DC from 1975 until 1995. He taught studio arts at Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria campus, from 1973 to June 2002. His major areas are drawing, printmaking, painting and design.

Major Highlights of Mr. Platt's professional career include: A three venue one-person exhibit of his work in England; group shows at the Smithsonian Museum [DC], Equal Rights and Social Justice; *Remembering the Present*, the Kreeger Museum, [DC]. He is also a founding member of the WD Printmaking workshop, DC, Percy Martin, director. Platt's work is represented in national museums and private collections throughout the country.

*forgotten contours*, the book these artists are showing in Transformer's BOOK exhibit, is a call and response collaboration between the written words of Carol Beane's poetry and her husband Michael Platt's visual images, each finding and creating resonances in the other. It is the artists first collaboration and their first experience of bookmaking. This is also Ms. Beane's first published book of poetry.

Beane's poetry turns on history, memory and recollection—uncovering the poems in the words that document the history of the collective experiences of the African Diaspora; discerning the poems in the routines of daily living; receiving the poems that dwell in personal circumstances.

Platt's images—originally lithographs, charcoal drawings and digital prints—are themselves layered with detail and nuance as they visually reference history, memories and the journeys of life.

*forgotten contours* is in the Special Collections of the Library of Congress and Howard University; in the New York Public Library's Schomburg Research Center in Black Culture and in private collections.

**CYNTHIA CONNOLLY** grew up in Los Angeles, CA. She moved to Washington, DC in 1981 as a young punk rocker. She graduated from the Corcoran School of Art with a BFA in Graphic Design in 1985. In 1986, she spent 6 months in San Francisco working on the punk zine, *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll*. It was there that she was inspired to move back to DC and make a book documenting the DC punk music scene. She published the *Banned in DC* book in 1988 with the help of Leslie Clague and Sharon Cheslow. During that time and after the publication of *Banned in DC*, she booked bands in a small alternative arts space called DC space from 1986-1991. Overlapping her work in the past and continuing to the present, she worked (s) at Dischord Records doing advertising and promotion. In about 1993, she started avidly doing photography.

The project of "people from DC with their cars" for a zine called *Speed Kills* was the impetus for doing photography. Since then, she has shown all over the world, with the "car" photos, but also newer photos of landscapes taken in 35mm black and white and also color photographs taken in color with the "half frame" format. Her photographs have been seen in *Index Magazine*, *Paper Magazine*, *Emigre*, *Jane Magazine*, *YM*, *7X7 San Francisco*, *After Hours*, *The Rolling Stone Book of Women in Rock*, *Our Band Could be Your Life*, *Declaration of Independents*, *Foder's Rock 'n' Roll Traveler*, *USA*, *Dance of Days*, and *Hitori*: "altogether one", from Japan. She is currently working on a book with Lee Ranaldo, (of *Sonic Youth*), to be released 2003.

For Transformer's BOOK exhibit, Ms. Connolly features a handmade book, limited edition, xeroxed, accordion folded, about 25 feet long, letterpressed cover and back, with an original photo on the front and

back. Entitled *EAST TO WEST*, it is photos of trucks driving from the east to west. She took the photos while driving west to east. Also featured are refrigerator magnets A-Z from the *San Francisco Alphabet*. This is a box with contact prints of about 100 letters from the San Francisco sidewalks made into magnets. The box lid and bottom are also covered in original photographs, and the lid has letter-pressed information.

**STEPHEN GIBSON** was born in Washington, DC and has lived in Boston, New York, Seattle, and San Francisco. He has worked at a winery, in a bookstore, in higher education, and as a bicycle messenger. The co-founder and editor of the magazine *Mobile City*, his poetry has appeared in magazines like *Ploughshares*, the *Boston Review*, and *Gargoyle*. His first book, *City of Midnight Skies*, was published Fall 2001 by Horse & Buggy Press.

In describing the books he displays in Transformer's BOOK exhibit, Mr. Gibson states: "Usually I use the typewriter to put down thoughts that will become poems, but sometimes this is impossible, like when I'm on assignment in a foreign city or watching television. The sketchbooks are useful devices for recording stray thoughts, jotting down telephone numbers, for drawing, and for collaging photos from the New York Times weekly business section together with pictures of armored personnel carriers and cheap-looking advertisements. Sometimes lines from these books make their way into poems; sometimes lines from poems make their way into these books. I like the sound of the typewriter keys hammering away on white paper, but I also enjoy spilling coffee across India ink drawings of men wandering dazed through the city."

**SARA GREENBERGER** is an artist from Brooklyn, New York. She employs found and constructed imagery along with humor and novel or tactile forms to share images of and ideas about people (while never picturing them directly).

*Dear Friend*, created specifically for the Transformer window space, is a bouquet of launched balloons after they have gone up-up-and-away and back down again. The imagery is culled from the once-frequent schoolyard practice of writing one's name and address on a card, attaching it to the string on the end of a helium balloon, and letting it go with the specific hope of reaching a potential pen-pal. This piece ties together both Greenberger's recent work (about non-communication, fate, history, pleasure, feelings, and xenophobia) and an earlier installation, "Class," from which most of the books in this exhibition are borrowed.

**LIDA HUSIK** was born in the Nation's Capitol, and graduated from the Corcoran School of Art in the late twentieth century. Since then she has been making art and music and having fun. Visually, Lida is obsessed with: textile design, architecture, commercial images of the '30s, '40's and '50's, and black and white movies. Possessed of a stubborn streak of political awareness/annoyance, she enjoys siphoning some of her rage out through art.

"In the Middle East and the dollar books (displayed in Transformer's BOOK exhibit), I am attempting to break down issues to their most basic child-like terms in which the truth sometimes seems obvious. The other two books are more form than content, the beauty of lost buildings, lost people, lost things."

**AMANDA KLEINMAN** was born and raised in Montgomery County, MD and moved to Washington, DC in 1994. She has been showing art in Washington since 1996. Kleinman has a Bachelors degree in Hearing and Speech Science and a Masters Degree in Special Education. Employed as a language disabilities teacher until 2000, she has since retired and plays organ full time for a rock band.

Ms. Kleinman states, "My art is born from a love of people and nature. I want to celebrate the innocence and honesty that can be found in every species by transforming selected individuals into characters. I represent these characters with multiple mediums—ink, paint, wood, cut paper. I will often combine text with a character's image so the observer will have an opportunity to share the thoughts and feelings of my characters as I understand them to be."

Ms. Kleinman's work in Transformer's BOOK exhibition, *Mad Peck: The True Story of a Morbidly Obese Chicken Who Fought Back and Won*, is a story about an obese chicken and her struggle. Made in the spirit of a children's book that isn't exactly appropriate for kids, this work deals with adult sensibilities through humor.

**STEPHEN E. LEWIS** "I'm primarily a painter. About a year ago I began to have the urge to create a work that was able to describe the world in a way that I wasn't able to do thru painting. My work is mainly political in subject so cartooning has always been of special interest to me. What I discovered while working on this book was both the fascinating way in which cartoon frames control the passage of time by dictating the speed the readers eye can move across the page, as well as the way disassociated events, when placed together automatically, become related to another by their proximity. Maybe this ability to suggest the dynamic movement of time was what I felt missing in painting and, to greater degree, why this whole project

ended up being a graphic novel instead of a series of paintings."

**NORMA FONG LYDON** is a Northern Californian, born in Marin County and educated at the University of California at Berkeley. She is a calligrapher who has also worked in book arts for many years. After living in Morocco, France, Laos, India, Bangladesh and Washington DC, her home is now Berkeley, where her work is shown at the Barbara Anderson Gallery.

Ms. Lydon states, "Book structures are of particular interest to me. I had often made blank models of the flag book before, but it was Julie Chen, teacher and book artist of Flying Fish Press, who inspired me to do the *Fortune Cookie* book."

## presses

**HORSE & BUGGY PRESS** Amidst a climate of e-books and other ridiculous gadgetry, fast food, strip malls, and the ubiquitous leaf blower Horse & Buggy Press has been publishing award-winning poetry, fiction, and essays in the form of exquisitely designed (and often hand-printed and hand-bound) first editions. This aesthetic revolution (not yet televised) of works by established artists (like Allan Gurganus) and emerging poets (such as Stephen Gibson) reminds readers there is an alternative to accepting the lowest common denominator - the often poorly designed pre-fabricated products presented within chain megastores which are largely devoid of the subtle nuances and textures that make life so interesting.

One of the tenets underlying the philosophy at Horse & Buggy Press is that great writing deserves great design deserves great bookmaking. The books created have a physical and emotional presence to them - a body and a soul - because of the attention to detail. The goal is to make the books with form reflecting their content, creating an intimate artifact, helping the authors' words sing off the page and turning the reading into an aesthetic experience. Handmade books are but one small way to reawaken our senses, connecting us more strongly to a writer's words, enriching our lives and reminding us of an alternative to the clockwork society and its disposable culture.

**HOT IRON PRESS** rose from the ashes of a now defunct zine distribution catalog that artists Kyle Bravo and Jenny LeBlanc ran for nearly two years. The How 2 Zine Distro, as it was called, carried over 50 titles of "practical and inspirational guides to actively pursuing more independent, self-sufficient, and empowering lifestyles." This spirit of action and empowerment led Bravo and LeBlanc to focus more specifically on the creation and distribution of their own work - the artwork that they themselves have made and that inspires them still to create. And so was born the Hot Iron Press, which borrows its moniker from the old adage and call to action: "STRIKE THE IRON WHILE IT'S HOT!"

Bravo and LeBlanc feel that the burgeoning Hot Iron Press retains much of the traits of the How 2 Zine Distro. Hot Iron Press involves and supports the practice of the Do It Yourself ethic, and enables them, as artists, to take steps towards making their lives ever more meaningful by the simple acts of fulfilling creation. The preservation of a dying craft does not concern them. Rather, they recognize with what abundance beautifully handmade independent publishing, art, zines, and music have tumbled into their lives. Bravo and LeBlanc want to emphasize as well as celebrate the vitality of these forms by circulating work and giving rise to new creations in these genres.

Bravo is currently working towards a Masters of Fine Arts in Printmaking at the University of North Carolina. LeBlanc received an MFA in Sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University.

## zines

**DOG HEADED BOY COMIX** Created by Washington, DC based artist Brendan R. Majewski, the Dog Headed Boy Comix, ("comix" so called because of their self-published/ corporate-less affiliation) are based in nonsensical, semi -non-narrative sketchbook doodles and stream of consciousness drawing. (With perhaps a nod towards the overweening, absurdly inhumane US meat industry). The comix with a more tenable story line and detailed artwork are the result of a desire to achieve a more developed and concentrated comic book effort, involving human headed characters.

**DOUBLE NEGATIVE** Jeff Wiesner started Double Negative when he was a freshman at University of Pittsburgh in 1992. The basic idea was to provide a somewhat public forum for artists to share their work: illustrations, photography, creative writing - anything that could be reproduced in black and white on paper