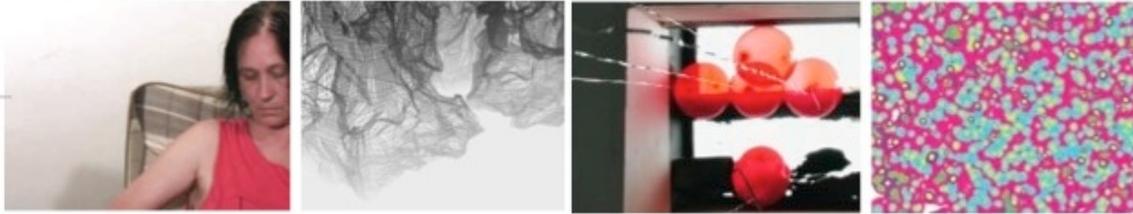


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Transformer is proud to announce our sixth installment of *The Exercises*, a unique peer and mentorship program for emerging artists:



E6: *in situ*

July 11 – August 15, 2009

OPENING DAY ARTIST TALK: July 11, 2009, 4pm

OPENING RECEPTION: July 11, 2009, 5 – 7pm

This 6th installment of Transformer's *Exercises for Emerging Artists* program, guest curated by artist **Brandon Morse**, focuses on time-based media. Exploring notions of communication, commodity, transformation, and situation, artists **Jeremy Haik**, **Clive Leung**, **Erik Loften**, and **Ding Ren** employ video as well as digital animation techniques, and utilize installation practices that make the way they display their work essential to the work itself.

"Tasked to further develop and focus their existing formal and conceptual concerns, each of the artists were asked to spend considerable time investigating how setting and presentation may be used to further the strengths inherent in their work. While this may seem to be a self-evident concern for any artist, the very aspect of working with time-based media in a physical space presents unique obstacles and opportunities. Each of the artists took up this challenge, and their completed works are comprised of integral conceptual and physical components."

–Brandon Morse

Launched in March 2004, Transformer's *Exercises For Emerging Artists* was created to support artists at critical points or crossroads in their professional growth and development, to advance their creative careers. Consisting of a series of two-hour, bi-weekly gatherings at Transformer spanning three months, the program is designed to stimulate and encourage participating artists as they create new work. In addition to peer critique sessions, the participating artists received mentorship and critical feedback on their work from Leigh Conner, Director of Conner Contemporary Art & *gogo art projects, artist Richard Chartier, along with Dawn Gavin, artist and Associate Professor at the University of Maryland.

About the artists & their works:

Jeremy Haik's *perfect tense* is an exploration of the ways in which humans as sensory beings communicate our experiences with one another through material interactions. The series of interviews conducted for this project began as an exploration of the process of transposing thoughts and emotions into the physical act of speech. The only task asked of the interviewees is to describe what constitutes their individuality: their "self." Once the question is asked, each individual is left alone in the interview space to respond as they see fit. The purpose of these interviews as they are represented in their final, edited forms is to reveal not the content of their answers, but instead the spaces and verbal hesitations that occur between fully articulated responses. In their edited form, the responses are a composite compression of the moments in which the participants are actively engaged in the process of translating intangible ideas into concrete words - the physical expression of speech. The editing process

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divides the participants by exposing their individual idiosyncrasies as well as uniting them through the impersonal excision of their spoken responses. Each response documents a unique manifestation of a universal struggle.

Clive Leung's work deals with concepts of subtle, "invisible" conflict and the tension it creates. The video installation *Shifting Mountains* is a transformative process of landscape formation inspired by Chinese Literati painting. In part, the abstract rendering of mountains and mist references the Literati's way of approaching verisimilitude in Chinese painting, while the bold, coarse, wire-like frames depicting the mountain clusters form a complicated, layered, and highly digitized texture. This interplay between the organic and the digital, traditional and modern, makes the piece a more abstracted composition than a realistic duplication. Clive states, "The conflict between the coarse digitalism and the painterly solitude is what I find interesting, and in some ways, poetic."

Erik Loften's projected video work, viewable from both inside and outside of Transformer's storefront space, explores the concept of "re-appropriating human nature." Through colorful, incessantly moving and mutating cell-like forms, he aims to address the modern day evolution of the "hunter/gatherer" method, which has taken the form of advertising and material obsession in modern society, filling the void of our basic human instinct for the hunt; a perpetual, ever-changing game of cat and mouse. Erik states about his work, "We as a race have lost most of our need for physical, animal competition, and therefore, have filled this void with a new means of entertaining our nerves. I aim to further explore the circulation of new advertising models that create a culture of fresh ideas and demands creativity. Some may see it as a manifestation of the way we are programmed, and others as a self-inflicted disease."

Ding Ren's work primarily focuses on the near-nothings and in-betweens of everyday life. Her two-part video installation, *Helium and Water*, uses already existing elements found in Transformer's project space, including a skylight she has filled with red balloons, and a "pothole" in the floor filled with water. The alternate filling and emptying of these two spaces has been captured on video, and is projected at a 1:1 scale near the original, corresponding subjects. The use of literal and digital representations in both pieces plays with the architectural nuances and imperfections of the gallery space, and is meant to be an inconspicuous work of mimicry. The juxtaposition of a video representation next to its literal counterpart shifts our perception of the everyday and allows for easily overlooked elements of a space to be viewed in a different light.

E6: *in situ* guest curator **Brandon Morse** received his BFA from the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point and his MFA in Art & Technology from The Ohio State University. He has exhibited his work in digital video and sound installation nationally and internationally. Exhibitions include the Corcoran Museum of Art in Washington, DC, the Nanjing Museum in China, and many gallery exhibitions across the United States, Europe and Asia. He is represented by Conner Contemporary Art, Washington, DC. Brandon Morse has been teaching digital media at the University of Maryland since 2000, and also serves there as the Director of Graduate Studies.

EXHIBITION HOURS: July 11 – August 15, 2009. Wednesday - Saturday, 1 - 7pm & by appointment.

For artist bio information, please contact us at 202.483.1102, or info@transformergallery.org.

Images (details, left to right): Jeremy Haik, Clive Leung, Ding Ren, Erik Loften.

TRANSFORMER is a Washington, D.C. based 501(c) 3 non-profit, artist-centered visual arts 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 2009/2010 exhibition series is 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 Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, and The Visionary Friends of Transformer.