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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, January 11, 2008

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Transformer, in partnership with George Washington University, is pleased to present:

FRAMEWORK Panel #7 - *Art School, Confidential: Rethinking Art Education*

Tuesday, January 22nd, 2008
6:45 – 8:15pm

George Washington University
Smith Hall of Art, Room 114
801 22nd Street, NW
Washington, DC

Transformer kicks off the new year with *Art School, Confidential: Rethinking Art Education*, the 7th installment of our dynamic **FRAMEWORK Panel Series**. Designed as a facilitated discussion focused on the changing values and practices in the sphere of art education, *Art School, Confidential: Rethinking Art Education* brings together an esteemed group of area artists and professors in a dialogue about the influence of art schools in the lives of artists and on the direction of contemporary art-making within the larger arts landscape.

Featuring panelists **Billy Colbert** (Adjunct Faculty, American University), **Maggie Michael**, **Brandon Morse** (Associate Professor of Digital Media & Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Art, University of Maryland, College Park, MD), **Renee Stout**, and **Rex Weil** (Professor of Art Theory, University of Maryland, College Park, MD), and moderated by **Dean Kessman** (Assistant Professor of Photography, George Washington University), the sixty minute panel discussion will be followed by a thirty minute question and answer segment with the audience.

Participating panelists in **FRAMEWORK Panel #7 - *Art School, Confidential: Rethinking Art Education*** will address questions such as: *To what extent can art be taught? Is the responsibility of an institution to transmit information or to set up a flexible support system that facilitates the making of art and exchange of ideas? How are art school practices affected by: the changing marketplace, increasing emphasis on measurable post-graduate success, rising tuition fees, and the growing mandate of art as refined informational platform? What potential value is offered by newer "DIY" art schools that forgo curriculum for more experimental, interactive projects and environments? How is the BFA, MA, MFA, etc. comparable to other non-art degrees?*

Launched in December 2002, Transformer's **FRAMEWORK Panel Series** seeks to expand critical arts dialogue while simultaneously engaging and developing Washington's contemporary arts audience through moderated panel discussions with a diverse cross-section of cultural leaders and experts. Previous **FRAMEWORK Panel** topics have included: *The Importance of the Curator, Financial Stabilization and Economic Opportunities for Artists, The Role of Community Organizations in Supporting Emerging Artists, Artist as Activist, The Role of the Arts Writer: Critiquing Arts Criticism and Collecting the Work of Emerging Artists.*

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FRAMEWORK guest speakers have included: Sasa Glavan, Center for Contemporary Art (Ljubljana, Slov.); Jose Dominguez, formerly of the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities (WDC); Celia O'Donnell, Creative Capital (NY, NY); Kathy Freshley, The Eugene & Agnes E. Meyer Foundation (WDC); Helen Frederick, Pyramid Atlantic (Silver Spring, MD); Kathleen Gilrain, SmackMellon (Brooklyn, NY), Glenn Harper, Sculpture Magazine (WDC) and Andy Grundberg, Corcoran Museum of Art (WDC), among others. Working to build a stronger arts infrastructure in DC, Transformer has presented the **FRAMEWORK Panel Series** in partnership with The Corcoran College of Art & Design, The Goethe Institute, The Warehouse Theater, Provisions Library, and Civilian Art Projects.

Panelist and Moderator bios for **FRAMEWORK Panel #7 - Art School, Confidential: Rethinking Art Education:**

Billy Colbert is an artist and an educator working and living in Washington, DC. In 2000, he won Best of Show in the Carrol Harris Simms National Black Art Biennale at the African American Museum in Dallas, Texas. Colbert has exhibited nationally and is in private and public collections across the country. In 2000, Colbert received his MFA in Painting from the University of Delaware, where he was a presidential fellow. Colbert is currently adjunct faculty at American University. He is represented by Mason Murer Fine Art in Atlanta.

Dean Kessmann received an M.F.A. from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in 1996. Presently, he lives and works in Washington, DC, where he has been an Assistant Professor of Photography at The George Washington University since 2002. Conner Contemporary Art represents his work. He has been included in one-person and group exhibitions at Conner Contemporary Art, Washington, DC, The Photographic Resource Center, Boston, MA, Museum of Religious Art, White Flag Projects, and Ellen Curlee Gallery, St. Louis, MO, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA, 1708 Gallery, Richmond, VA, Project Row Houses, Houston, TX, and ARC Gallery, Chicago, IL. His work has been presented at a number of art fairs, including *ArtDC* in Washington, DC, *PULSE* and *Scope* in NYC, and *Aqua Art* in Miami, FL.

Maggie Michael, born and raised in Wisconsin, has lived and worked in California and has been living and working in Washington, DC since graduate school. Michael is a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant and an Artist Fellowship from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. She was a resident artist in the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden's Artist at Work program and has recently been awarded a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship. Her work has been featured in *At Length* magazine and reviewed in *The Washington Post*, *Art Papers*, and *Art in America*. Michael's work is in international private and public collections including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and the US Art in Embassies Program.

Brandon Morse is a Washington, DC based artist working in digital media and installation. He has exhibited nationally and internationally in galleries, video and animation festivals, and online. He is represented by Conner Contemporary Art, in Washington, DC and by D.E.N. Contemporary in Culver City, CA. Morse is an Associate Professor in the Department of Art at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD where he teaches courses in Digital Media. Since 2007, he has been the Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Art.

Renee Stout grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and received her BFA from Carnegie Mellon University in 1980. In 1985 she moved to Washington, D.C. and began to explore the roots of her African American heritage. She looks to the belief systems of African peoples and their descendants throughout the African

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Diaspora, as well as to the world and her immediate environment, for the inspiration to create works of art that encourage self-examination, self-empowerment and self-healing.

Rex Weil is an artist, writer, and educator living and working in Washington, DC. He currently teaches art theory at the University of Maryland, College Park, where he also directs the MFA colloquium. He has also taught in American University's MFA in Italy program, the MFA program at George Mason University and at the Corcoran College of Art and Design. Mr. Weil has been a visiting artist/critic at the MFA programs of Tyler School for the Arts and Virginia Commonwealth University. He is a contributing editor for ARTnews and has published over 200 essays and reviews about contemporary art for ARTnews, the Wall Street Journal, the New Art Examiner, and Washington City Paper, among other publications. He has received several DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities fellowships for his painting and sculpture. Mr. Weil has also developed a successful series of art workshops for adults with developmental disabilities and an innovative art and writing curriculum for at-risk high school students.

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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 2006/2007 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.

Special Thanks to Marissa Long, Transformer's Framework Panel Coordinator, for her great work in organizing this and our Framework Panels # 5 and #6 in 2007.
