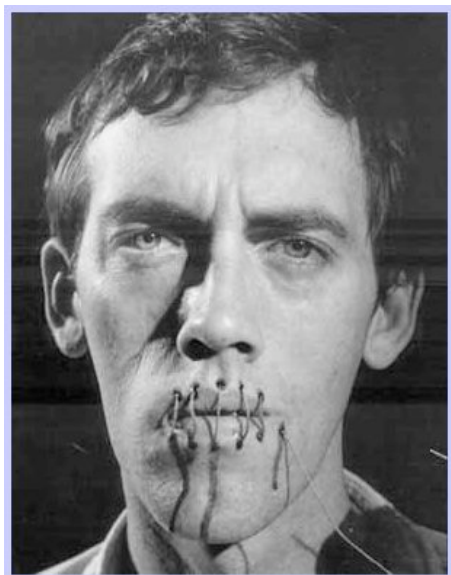


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
12.10.11

CONTACT:
Alison Konecki/info@transformergallery.org
Dafna Steinberg/dafnas@dcjcc.org



hide/SPEAK

Monday, December 20, 2010
6:30-8:30 pm
Washington DC Jewish Community Center
1529 16th St. NW (16th & Q)
www.washingtondcjcc.org



t r a n s f o r m e r



An evening with David C. Ward, Historian, National Portrait Gallery;
Curator, *Hide/Seek: Difference in Desire in American Portraiture*

In conversation with:

Tyler Green, Writer, *ArtInfo*
Victoria Reis, co-Founder, Executive & Artistic Director, *Transformer*
Dafna Steinberg, artist; Director, *Ann Loeb Bronfmann Gallery, Washington DCJCC*

Additional speakers to be determined

Facilitated by Catherine V. Dawson & Joshua Ford, Director of Programs, Washington DCJCC

This conversation is presented free to the public by the Washington DC Jewish Community Center, Transformer, and Catherine V. Dawson.

On October 29, 2010, *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*, the first major museum exhibition to explore themes of gender and sexuality in American art, opened at the National Portrait Gallery. On December 1, artist David Wojnarowicz's 1987 video work *A Fire in my Belly* - which was intended to articulate, among other things, the silencing and suffering of AIDS victims - was pulled from the exhibition by the director of the Smithsonian Institution. This decision was made after special interest groups and members of Congress took offense to 11 seconds of the video, which contains a shot of ants crawling on a crucifix.

In protest of the Smithsonian's decision, numerous art galleries and institutions have been screening the banned video. Additionally, thanks to the efforts of www.hideseek.org, panels have now developed in multiple cities across the country to discuss the many issues that have arisen as part of this censorship - or, as some are calling it, a return to the "culture wars."

The first screening of *Fire in My Belly* in reaction to the removal of the video from the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) took place at Transformer in Washington, DC, followed by an artistic action protest Transformer organized with artists in the community. Now Transformer and the Washington DC Jewish Community Center (DCJCC) present *hide/SPEAK*, in collaboration with writer & activist Catherine V. Dawson, a conversation with *Hide/Seek* co-curator David C. Ward to discuss the events that lead up to the Smithsonian's removal of the video from the exhibition, the events that have unfolded since the video was pulled, the social and political implications of the situation, and how we as a community – in all definitions and configurations of “community” – view this particular moment.

This discussion is presented as part of the Washington DCJCC's **Rapid Response** series, which “seeks to periodically provide a forum, as public events warrant, to shape a quick, civil discussion on ideas that have immediate cultural relevance and about which average citizens ought to be able to speak with one another,” and as part of Transformer's **FRAMEWORK Panel Series**, “which engages artists, arts professionals, cultural leaders, and audiences in conversation to create an oral ‘field guide’ to encourage and support individual emerging artists in our community, and educate audiences through the sharing of best practices within the contemporary visual arts.”

Transformer will be continuing the conversation started with *hide/SPEAK* in a part two **FRAMEWORK Panel** to be presented January 2011. Tentatively titled: *Culture Wars Revisited - Changing the Terms of the Debate 20 Years Later*, this panel will look at the Cultural Wars of the late 80s, how they have recently been re-ignited, and the best practices both past & present by artists, organizations, and arts audiences in response to censorship and threats of having funding pulled due to programming content. Venue to be determined.

For further information on *hide/SPEAK*, please contact: Washington DCJCC at dafnas@washingtondcjcc.org/202.777.3208 and visit www.washingtondcjcc.org, or Transformer at info@transformergallery.org/202.483.1102 and visit www.transformergallery.org.

Image credit: *Untitled*, 1990, by David Wojnarowicz (in collaboration with Phil Zwickler and Rosa von Praunheim), still from the film *Silence = Death*. http://www.thebody.com/visualaids/web_gallery/2004/giovanis/13.html

The Washington DC Jewish Community Center (DCJCC) is the Jewish community's address in our Nation's Capital, providing uniquely urban educational, social, cultural and fitness programs to the DC community inside and outside the beltway. Open to all, with the mission of building and preserving Jewish identity, we promote community values through Washington DCJCC programs and services. The Washington DCJCC is a member of the Jewish Community Center Association, a beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, and a designated agency of the United Way of the National Capital Area (under W for Washington DCJCC) designee #54775.

transformer 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 emerging contemporary artists and emergent expression in the visual arts, Transformer connects and promotes emerging visual artists based locally, nationally, and internationally through exhibitions and programs partnerships with artists, curators, commercial galleries, museums and other cultural institutions.