



**District of Columbia
Arts Center**

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Director's Letter

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Our mission is to support artists, and while that can be done very well with a nice facility, it is also done with energy, faith, and a lot of hard work. We realize that the relationship between artists, art and art patrons is an exchange of ideas, visions and stimulation. Nowhere is that better demonstrated than in the exhibit now on view in our gallery. Our collective program, Sparkplug, is all about what is not touchable, not easily explained away, not designed to go with the color of your sofa and rug. At the opening I was told by some artist friends that they would have nightmares over one particular series of work. Now, I am sure that Michael Matason had no intention of creating that particular result, but I know that he was looking to see what the work might bring out in people. And if anyone wanted to debate whether it is art or not, the work defended itself, seemingly saying, "I evoke, therefore I am." I could probably relate an anecdote for each of the artists that have work in this show, as well as the curators, but I think it's best left to you, when you see the exhibition, to find your own way through the multiple layers of technique, experimentation, discovery and imagination that make up this exceptional display. Accurately entitled "Findings", it takes you on a journey of what I consider to be the most solemn duty of an artist: to engage and question. Of course, it's a two-way street, and there you get to make good on your duty as a viewer: to engage and question.

I know. I can get a bit hokey on this kind of stuff, but it really is what turns my crank, and consequently, turns the wheels of DCAC. You see, whether we have a super nice space, or whether you have a hard financial year, or whether we live in a sort of political limbo, our minds and spirits are seeking engagement and stimulation. There is no other way to think anew about our problems and issues if we don't jog our consciousness with something unexpected, new or questionable. For me, this place where I can experience the most far out arts, and I include all of them, this place where I can have a private, protected, internal conversation about value, quality, intention, this is a place I call sanctuary. Here I can give myself the freedom to listen to every small, still voice that cries out from my subconscious and life experience and allow myself to -ind something. It might not be new, it might not be earth shattering, but it's my own, my own journey of reElection, a chance to assess my own thought processes and check in with what I have become. It's how I qualify my decisions in the real world. I guess you could call it a sort of cacophonous overstimulation meditation.

But I think it's important we participate in that, otherwise I'd be stupid to keep working at a place like this. We've made it through this very difficult year, and I, too, hope that 2010 will

hold a bounty of good things and ideas for all of us. But if it doesn't, we'll still be here; engaging, questioning.... and evoking. Here's to the second decade of the 21st century.

B Stanley,
Executive Director