



**District of Columbia
Arts Center**

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DCAC Archive : Director's Letters June : August 2012

It's summertime and the heat is upon us. That can mean only one thing - 1460 Wallmountables is just around the corner. Every year we get ready to host the largest show of the season and I inevitably write in my newsletter missive about the opportunity that DCAC and Wallmountables brings to artists and audiences alike. And it's true, providing opportunity is a major part of our mission. Opportunity is the keystone of the mission of our organization. The fact that artists of every ilk can propose projects for our space is what makes us unique. It's what we are known for and it's what drives our programs. But you've no doubt heard enough about opportunity in my past letters. What occurs to me to talk about today is the availability of DCAC.

Of course, I mean that our theater and gallery are available to artists and audiences, a fact well evidenced by our calendar of events. But I also mean available in the broader sense, more like the French term "disponible," which means highly available. It also means being open and ready for the unknown; open and ready for the unforeseeable. And that's what I'm talking about in relation to DCAC. Here again, I don't mean just DCAC the building, I mean the organization, its board, its staff, its committees and its members. We all together make up DCAC and the artists who exhibit, perform or learn here find what they need because we are not only available but ready to experience something we've never seen or heard before. We are not trying to stick to an aesthetic or style, we haven't decided that what happens at DCAC should look or feel a certain way. We are crouched, like a tiger stalking its prey, looking for the unexpected, trying to entice it out from its hiding place.

I think that is a special quality and nowhere is it more apparent than in our Visual Arts Committee. This committee not only reviews the art submissions that come in, it does the studio visits that follow the submissions and engages with the artist to find out as much as they can about the work, the process, and the impulse behind it. The idea of Sparkplug came from this committee, the idea of the Curatorial Initiative, and the idea of the DCAC Art Decathlon came from this committee.

In each case, we had no idea what would come from these programs. We only wanted to put something into motion that we hoped would have a resonance. I can tell you that each of these programs have been great successes. We are currently accepting applications for the next group of artists to participate in Sparkplug, our fourth such grouping, every one unique. We just closed the mentor-curated exhibition of this year's Curatorial Initiative and are looking forward to the upcoming mentee-curated exhibition in September. The winner of the Decathlon is

readying an exhibition for January of 2013. All of these represent unknown territory for us, no matter how many times we go through the process. But it's what makes being on the committee rewarding, and it's what helps make DCAC what it is.

I don't know about you, but I am available for this year's 1460 Wallmountables to be the best ever. I hope you'll join me in this by participating either as an artist or an observer, and let's throw down the gauntlet: Bring on the unforeseeable. We are all eager, waiting and willing to embrace it. See you there.

B Stanley,
Executive Director