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Dissident Artists from Former East Germany Celebrate Weekend Marking 20th Anniversary of Germany Reunification

October 2 reception to be hosted by Breakthrough Art Organization at Edison Place Gallery for German and American dignitaries, artists, media and others to experience work and stories of visual artists who endured repression

September 27, 2010 (Washington, D.C.) – Their lives have been defined by struggle for basic freedoms. Coming of age under a communist regime, they endured repression, exile and even imprisonment for the sake of artistic expression. On October 2, eight artists from former East Germany --- together with 90 pieces of their artwork -- will be honored at a gala reception at Pepco's Edison Place Gallery. Washington, D.C. is the third city on a 5-city US tour of "[Breakthrough! Twenty Years After German Unification – Critical Perspectives of Berlin Artists](#)," launched to mark the 20th anniversary of one of the transformative historic events of the late 20th century.

The October 2 reception, an invitation-only event, is being held in conjunction with celebrations taking place at the German Embassy over the weekend to mark the official October 3rd German reunification anniversary date. It will run from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. Guests, including German and American dignitaries, artists and members of the media, will have the opportunity to discuss with the artists their art and their extraordinary experiences.

"Understanding the risks these artists took to freely express themselves allows us to appreciate our basic freedoms in a very tangible way" said Jeff Thinnies, founder of Breakthrough Art Organization, a DC-based non-profit that champions the work of artists as a means to overcome obstacles in life.

Artists in attendance will be painters Peter Herrmann, Thomas Klingenstein, Frank Roedel, Reinhard Stangl and Inge Schmidt; photographers Gerald Adam Hahn and Harald Hauswald; and sculptor Hans Scheib. Additionally, remarks will be made by Deputy Chief of Mission for the German Embassy in the US, Jens Hanefeld.

Breakthrough's exhibition in Washington, D.C runs through October 8. During the week of October 4-8, schools and universities can register for students to participate in organized discussions with the artists that will be hosted at the Newseum, which also houses a permanent exhibition on the Berlin Wall. Educational materials can be downloaded for free from the Breakthrough website.

Breakthrough! already has traveled to Nashville and Aspen. It will continue to San Antonio in late October and then move on to Chicago early in 2011. Breakthrough is substantially underwritten by a grant from the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as contributions from participating foundations. The specific governmental department funding *Breakthrough! Twenty Years After German Unification* is *The Transatlantic Program of the Federal Republic of Germany with funds of the European Recovery Program of the Federal Ministry for Economy and Technology*.

Breakthrough! Twenty Years After German Unification is free and open to the public from noon to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday at the Pepco Edison Place Gallery, 702 Eighth Street NW. For more information, visit breakthroughart.org

To request a press packet, please email info@breakthroughart.org.

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