

Dear Senior Fellows and Friends,

On Friday, April 20th, twenty-two of us made our way to the Charles Krause Reporting Fine Art Gallery, 13<sup>th</sup> and N Streets, N.W., to see a special exhibit of Finnish photographs, Duva/Diva, and to have a dialogue about personal risk and change with Charles Krause, foreign correspondent and gallery owner. Several people expended enormous energy to attend, including Tabatha Pilgrim, who arrived with suitcase in tow, having just returned from a week in New York with a cohort of Excellence in Government Fellows. Another went out of his way to help at the gallery, and his generosity set the tone for the evening.

I scribbled some notes about what took place between our host and the group, but must tell you that the memory of the lovely sound of a fountain splashing in the courtyard is much clearer! As one participant said, "It was not your typical see-and-be-seen gallery event, but uplifting and satisfying." This was a more complex discussion than anticipated. Charles told the story of his first exhibit a year ago, the [Solidarity](#) logo, whose designer he considers to have made all the difference in Poland by giving Lech Walesa's movement a symbol and a name that went viral. This led to consideration of the differences between political propaganda and art, which Charles sees as the difference between art's being instructed, being in the service of a product, and an artist's summoning a sincere expression from within.

Charles met the Finnish theatre troupe behind the current exhibit while in Gdansk, and subsequently went to Helsinki and saw "these stunning photos, deliberately taken to change perceptions," bringing to mind Diane Arbus. The next week, Diane Blumenthal wrote about the photos, "They are beautiful and powerful portraits--some outright disturbing and others more subtle, contemporary riffs on the way Goya and Velazquez depicted similar people who were different. I've been assimilating the experience--it was very powerful. I wonder what a performance by the DuvTeatern is like?"

Charles also thinks that we miss a lot of what's going on in the world, and some of our policies might be more successful if we paid attention. Implicit in all of his comments was the conviction that art can play a powerful role in changing what people think and do. For that reason, he expressed some disappointment at the fact that government agencies here did not express interest in the [Duva/Diva](#) exhibit. He views this gallery work as experimental. Perhaps one reason why is that it's not always clear what will speak to people or catalyze a change of heart.

As was said initially, the thing that hooked me were the questions, "What is beauty? Who is worthy of admiration? Who is a Diva? And who is not?" Seriously considered, these questions pull us outside our comfort zones as they energize us. As Pragati Singh said, "Underneath the obvious, there is that intangible and more powerful thing called inspiration. I left the dinner inspired, so thank you! I am very much looking forward to continued growth with everyone."

Participant affiliations were as follows:

American Clean Skies Foundation  
American Psychological Association  
Charles Krause Reporting Fine Art Gallery  
Consultant, IT Workforce Issues  
Defense Security Service  
Department of Education  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Department of Homeland Security  
Department of Homeland Security, Retired  
Department of Labor  
Department of the Treasury  
Department of Transportation  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Government Accountability Office  
Partnership for Public Service  
Securities and Exchange Commission  
Teracore  
The Mind to Lead

A generous spirit of learning and collegiality was fostered and enjoyed by all. Please consider joining us in the future.

This message includes a photo and – unfortunately – an invitation to tonight’s opening of a new exhibit, which was timed to coincide with Vladimir Putin’s 3rd inauguration as President of Russia. Computer trouble delayed the recap. If you want to stop in, than please RSVP to [ckrause@charleskrausereporting.com](mailto:ckrause@charleskrausereporting.com). The next exhibit, the Watergate portraits, begins June 17.

Regards,  
Kitty Wooley