



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### Snippets from the Bright and from the Shade: The Camera Work of David J. Spear

September 3 - December 23, 2010

Artist Reception and Gallery Talk: September 3, 5-8 PM

David Spear Lecture Concerned Photography: October 6, 6 PM

Saturday Family Art Workshop with David Spear: October 9,  
11AM-12:30 PM

Teacher Workshop: Photography and Poetry/Visions and  
Voices: November 6, 9AM-12PM

Missoula, MT / August 5, 2010/ Missoula Art Museum (MAM) / MAM is pleased to present *Snippets from the Bright and from the Shade: The Camera Work of David J. Spear*. David Spear has long journeyed with camera in hand. From his high school days in Connecticut when he walked into his school's newspaper pronouncing himself a photographer, through his early years in Montana, and onto the present, he has carried a camera, refining the craft of shutter speed and decisive moment.

In the 1970's, he began a two decade stint in NYC's International Center for Photography before moving to Montana in the 90's. Spear has continually documented his surroundings in film – the eclectic range of characters, objects, and land that make up his home, wherever that may be. This exhibition, *Snippets from the Bright and from the Shade*, surveys several bodies of his work from the past four decades.

Early in his career, Spear recognized the value of image making, its link with storytelling and identity, and was determined to share his love of photography with others. In the 1970's as the night watchman and staff photographer for the International Center of Photography in Manhattan, Spear undertook the task of fulfilling the institution's mission "to bring photography into the lives of people who might otherwise not have access to it." Having complete access to the institute's archives and photo labs he used these resources to introduce photography programs to seven NYC high schools. In 1985 Spear developed the ICP's Community Outreach Program for underserved communities of New York City and was its primary instructor through 1997.

His outreach work continues to this day where he works with students at the Two Eagle River School, an alternative high school, and Salish Kootenai College in Pablo. Included in the exhibition are works of Spear's students from his days in Harlem to his current work on the Flathead Reservation. Choosing, even in this day of digital ease, to work with traditional

photographic methods and primarily black and white film, Spear's work resonates with that of 1950's street photographer Robert Frank. Both capture moments that are timeless in their depiction of the human spirit, representations that are dignified without being contrived.

Featured work in this exhibition include Spear's images of Montana from the late 70's and early 80's; work from his days in Manhattan in the 80's and 90's; a body of work centered around his father when he was a priest; a selection of portraits and landscapes; and lastly scenes from his most recent years on the Flathead Reservation, including work of his students.

*Youth, Vision and Voice: Student Work Guided by David Spear* is a slice of the work that Spear has done as outreach with youth groups from seven NYC high schools in the 1980's to his current work on the Flathead Reservation in Ronan, Pablo, Arlee, and St. Ignatius. Spear has worked with hundreds of youths. He begins by arming his students with Polaroid cameras, instructing them to take instant portraits of classmates and then respond in writing. Viewing the dozens of images and the written observations by the photographers and their subjects is fascinating as the youthful artists comment on what they see in the faces of their friends as well as their own expressions. This activity opens the door to visual literacy as students learn to recognize the power of their images. In another series, students document their communities, depicting unique visions of their day to day lives.

Over a period of three months, more than 1,200 fifth graders will visit MAM and complete an art project related to the exhibition. The exhibition will be the educational foundation for the Fifth Grade Art Experience and is co-sponsored by the Art Associates of Missoula and Trail 103.3.

Contact: For more information please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406-728-0447, visit the MAM website at [www.missoulaartmuseum.org](http://www.missoulaartmuseum.org) or contact Stephen Glueckert, Exhibitions Curator, [stevegl@missoulaartmuseum.org](mailto:stevegl@missoulaartmuseum.org), 406.728.0447 x226.

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**About MAM:** FREE EXPRESSION / FREE ADMISSION. The Missoula Art Museum strives to engage artists and audience in the creative exploration of contemporary art relevant to our community, state and region. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Gallery Hours: Wed-Fri, 10AM-5PM, Sat, 10AM-3PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.