



**District of Columbia  
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## **DCAC Archive: Director's Letter July : August 2009**

On Friday, June 19 we celebrated the opening of a wonderful exhibition by Sparkplug, the collective of artists and curators facilitated by DCAC. It is an excellent example of the work of those members, and it will be on view at the Arlington Arts Center throughout the summer.

That very evening one of the members of that group, Mark Planisek, suffered an accident on his way home and within days he was no longer with us. We mourn his loss. He was a dedicated artist and colleague, and his presence will be sorely and profoundly missed. We all keep saying that it happened so fast that we can hardly grasp it. But it happens like that. Friends, family, colleagues, they are with us one moment, enjoying life, participating to the fullest, and then they can be gone, no goodbye, no chance to have that last conversation. I don't say this to be morbid, I say it because as I think about Mark, I see that he was like so many of the artists I know, from every medium. He, like they, had dedicated himself to his art. He had another job that paid the bills, he participated in everything he could that caught his interest and would help him progress as an artist. I'm sure that he faced disappointment, sometimes questioned his logic in pursuing a career in art and dreamed of a day when he could support himself fully through his artwork.

It is the way of the artist, and it can be a daunting and difficult life. We can be certain that at the high school career day there was no table for art. No one there to tell you that there would be no health insurance, no 401k, no paid holidays, no sick leave, no pay. Artists are not artists because they simply want to be or dream of fame and fortune (that dream is quickly dashed), they are and remain artists because they have made a profound choice in their life. They have decided not that they will be artists, but that they will never not be artists. Once that threshold is crossed, and you know what it is that you will never allow yourself not to be doing, you find a strength, a resolve that is unflappable. Sure, there are hard times, lonely times, even depressing times, but those are passing things, because it is better to be a poor or depressed or lonely artist than not to be an artist at all. Through that determination art is created and we all get to see it, and watch it grow and evolve. These artists make sacrifices to create that work, and most of them will never be rewarded for it, and they know it, but that will not stop them, they will create, and we, as a society will benefit. I believe in this, and I believe in these artists. We may not all agree on aesthetics, process, or themes, but there is no

denying the time, patience and desire it took to create works of art. I think it is important to support these artists, and that's what we try our best to do at DCAC. Our goal is not to create famous artists, or blow smoke up their asses about how great they are, but to encourage people who are serious about their commitment. I don't know about you, but I think I am a better person for knowing these people, they remind us that there is more to life than money, or high-status jobs, they remind us that we are all connected somewhere deep in our mysterious subconscious, and that through their art we can have a conversation without ever speaking. I want more people like this in the world. I, like so many, will miss Mark Planisek, but I know his life has inspired many others, and they will keep going, creating art. And thankfully, because he was an artist, I can still have a silent conversation with him.

**B Stanley,**

Executive Director

