



**District of Columbia
Arts Center**

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DCAC Archive : Director's Letters

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Ah, July in Washington. The only thing that makes July seem like a good month to me is the arrival of August. I am no fan of the heat. I recall a sweltering summer when I was 23 years old in my top floor (then) ghetto apartment at 14th and Corcoran. It was so hot that my friends and I would lie motionless in the middle of the floor hoping for any small breeze to waft through the open windows. We most likely would have literally melted that summer had Sears and Roebuck not miraculously decided to send me an unsolicited credit card. I promptly got a ride to Sears and purchased a ceiling fan. It cost me \$85.00, and within hours we were lying in the middle of the floor under the continuous rush of a human-made breeze. It was a modest step up, but it was a saving grace to us.

These days I survive the summer with air conditioning blasting, and it's a good thing, too, because July brings us one of the most popular events that DCAC creates: the 1460 Wallmountables. It is by far the most attended opening of the year with the over 100 artists and their friends all trying to get in and see the unparalleled display of art from floor to ceiling. One has to push through the shoulder-to-shoulder crowd to get refreshments and there are photos of me speaking at past Wallmountables openings with my shirt drenched with sweat. But we just had our air conditioning checked out and pumped up with Freon, so we are ready for the onslaught. And besides, it's well worth joining the crowd to be a part of such a great scene.

The 1460 Wallmountables is more than just a great party, it's a fantastic opportunity for people who dabble in art or who have yet to get exhibitions to show their work alongside accomplished and well-known artists. And after all, opportunity is what DCAC is all about. Not only do the participating artists get to show their art, but they get the opportunity to meet other artists and get feedback on their work. Many artworks sell during the run of the exhibit, which just adds to the benefit of taking part. And as if all of that isn't reason enough to participate, there is the \$100 prize for the best use of the 2 ft. by 2 ft. square. If you are already a member you get a free space to show your work, so why not join in?

When I first came to DCAC Wallmountables was structured such that the opening and the hanging of the art were one and the same event. What really put the kibosh on that way of doing things was that the third year I was here it rained like crazy that night and nobody came with art. It was a complete and dismal failure. So now we open the gallery for three days prior to the opening so people have the chance to come and hang work when the weather permits. Usually on the first day, for about an hour and a half before we open the doors at 3:00 there is a

line of some 60 people waiting to get in and snag the prime locations on the walls of the gallery. Many of these folks are veterans of Wallmountables; I've watched Kelley Posey's kids grow up through her coming every year to hang her work. When they were really little, she would bring their crazy crayon drawings on semi-crumbled paper and tack them close by her own art works. As they got older, they started creating more involved art and started to want to choose their own spaces. The little drawings turned into sculptures and paintings and I'm pretty sure at least one of them sold their work. I have to wonder what they will bring this year, along with so many other kids who are now teens and have plenty of things to do besides come to DCAC on a hot July afternoon and present themselves through their creativity. Yes, I'm talking to you, Lily Rose.

So that's my pitch this month. Opportunity is out there (or really, in here) for you to take. Wallmountables is an opportunity to show art, get feedback, meet people, have fun, buy art, celebrate summer, and most importantly, support DCAC! In the end that's the hugest element for us: we need your support and the support of everyone you know. Despite our high public profile and our successful programs, after 22 years we still struggle through each and every month to pay our bills and stay alive. I know it's hard to believe, but it's true, and we value your support because it is contributions from individuals like you that keep us alive. So I'm hoping for a blow out this July at Wallmountables with zillions of new members and even more renewing members. It ain't nothing but a party and I expect to see you there. (I promise not to sweat on you.)

B Stanley,
Executive Director