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Title: *Spark 9.12.15*

Artist: Victoria Helena Mihatovic

Grant: Lagunitas Art Street Project \$20,000 level

Narrative:

On September 12, 2015, a small spark started in the area of Cobb Mountain. Within a few hours, this spark turned into flames that spread to 60 miles overnight. These flames soon engulfed much of the landscape and became the third most damaging wildfire in California history. With injured firefighters, four casualties and thousands left homeless, the Valley Fire impacted many friends, family and residents in the surrounding cities and counties. Hearts and homes opened up to those in need in vast numbers. Municipalities banded together, such as Petaluma Animal and Emergency Services, to help ease as much devastation as possible. Those who were able to help in any way did so. With *Spark 9.12.15*, I would like to commemorate and honor those who volunteered their time, goods, and services to so many in the most dire time of their lives. It was with a single spark and flame that such a tragedy occurred. Conversely, it is the spark of humanity that we all share that encourages us to band together and help those in need. It is this spark that will endure through the lengthy and arduous rebuilding and healing process, symbolizing the smallest of good deeds, in the midst of the most ominous of calamities.

Spark 9.12.15 will be fabricated from six pieces of reclaimed $\frac{3}{4}$ inch steel, procured at our local family owned steel supplier in Petaluma. These pieces will then be certifiably structurally welded to a form echoing that of a rising flame. The surface will be void of any factory markings to encourage the natural rust patina to be exposed. Upon completion, *Spark 9.12.15* will then be treated with an outdoor clear coating to insure its stability for decades to come. Installation will occur with the cooperation of the City of Petaluma, Lagunitas Brewing Company and a civil engineer.

As an artist that has made Santa Rosa and Sonoma County her home over the last few years (relocating from the East Bay), the Valley Fire affected me and those close to me. As much as we did to assist people and animals through various means, I feel it is important to pay homage to everyone involved throughout the surrounding areas.

