

Natural Woman

Holly Mazar-Fox | Photo: Benjamin C. Tankersley | September 30, 2014

Local sculptor Nara Park showcases an architectural spirit at this year's (e)merge art fair.



REALITY STAR Artist Nara Park's sculptures straddle the line between the natural and the manufactured.

The secret of Nara Park and her extraordinary work are no more. The sculptor can thank a palpable summer buzz from her solo exhibit at DC's Honfleur Gallery, which propelled her selection to showcase work from her series *Never Forget* at this year's [\(e\)merge art fair](#)—now in its fourth iteration of celebrating important contemporary works from international artists.

Park's work straddles a reverence for the natural world and a modern affection for the manufactured. Reimagining the dialogue between monuments and the floral landscapes that frame them, Park's exquisite pieces comprise a multitude of slate stone-pattern paper boxes. So realistic are the artist's handling of materials and textures, her sculptures become mirages that successfully tease the eye. "I explore

the complex relationship between man and nature by recreating natural elements through synthetic channels,” Park says. “My latest work reflects this bond on a deeper level, investigating the simulations of nature and man’s quest for eternal life.” She points to her collegiate studies of environmental and Native American literature as the driving force behind her artistic influences.

Park’s creative engagement with the written word is manifested in her art in other ways. Drawing inspiration from Washington’s monuments, each sculpture is adorned with a word the artist has selected among the many she has observed on the memorials around town. “I’m fascinated by the cultural and material associations of stone crafted for graves and memorials that serve as eternal markers of the past, while also behaving as icons of permanence,” she says. Park’s gift is her ability to synthesize DC’s landscape, memorials and architecture—all immortalizing the city—through contemporary art. She’s a discovery worth celebrating.

(e)merge art fair, Oct. 2-5, Capitol Skyline Hotel, 10 I St. SW

TOP FIVE The art fair known as (e)merge continues to grow and showcase dynamic works from international contemporary artists. Here are five elements not to overlook.



LOCAL VISION Baltimore artist Terence Hannum’s work will be showcased at (e)merge.

International Exhibitors Galleries worldwide will exhibit, including Belgium’s [Nomad Gallery](#), Boliva’s [Salar Galeria de Arte](#), Saudi Arabia’s [Naila Art Gallery](#) and Nigeria’s [Atanda Gallery](#).

Performance Art DC’s [Holly Bass](#) and Sheldon Scott will have significant roles at the fair, with the latter holding workshops about his craft.

Local Emerging Artists Baltimore's [Terence Hannum](#) showcases his astonishing work with cassette tape on canvas.

Social Media The fair's social-media campaign—What's on Your Walls—matches collectors and artists during the exhibit.

Venue The [Capitol Skyline Hotel](#) hosts the event again this year, with a Gallery Platform in hotel rooms, and an Artist Platform with vetted art selections in public spaces and designated floors.