

Daily Campello Art News

Since 2003... F. Lennox Campello's art news, information, gallery openings, commentary, criticism, happenings, opportunities, and everything associated with the global visual arts scene with a special focus on the Greater Washington, DC area.



Sunday September 25, 2011

(e)merge day three

Today was the last day, and even though people traffic was a little slower, towards the 4PM hour, it increased and then suddenly there were five good sales at once: one of the very cool self contained video installations by the very young John Miles Runner (who I think was the hit of the MFA room), two paintings by Sheila Giolitti and three more drawings by yours truly.... yeah buddy!

The hot wire known as Mera Rubell dropped by the space during the day (she'd also come by the day before to chat), bringing in some of her friends and colleagues, and said some very nice things about both my work and Giolitti's paintings. Several of them stayed behind after she left, chatting and asking for business cards. That dynamo of a woman is something else, and her presence in the DC art scene is electric; I also met her gigantic husband, who is also a very nice guy.

Who was the (e)merging star from (e)merge? I predict that it will be **Wilmer Wilson IV**. The kid was on fire and I am told that some key collectors were picking up the photographs of his performances. Get him now (I've already have and plan to get some more).

Was (e)merge a success? Only time and 2012 will tell, but as an experienced art gallery participant (as critic, artist and dealer), I can tell you that (e)merge's success can be best measured by the fact that in its first year, it felt like an established art fair. I know, I know... were people buying art? That's the key question and the main one that gallerists use to measure a fair's success, especially in these times of financial austerity.

However, and lacking any empirical financial/sales data, it certainly "felt" like most other successful art fairs: some galleries appeared to do well, some appeared to have broken even (always a "success") and some appeared to have sold nothing. That's what happens at every art fair on the planet.

However Number Two: (e)merge is more (at least for the DMV) than just a fair:

(a) It sparked a satellite fair which in turn **gestated a couple more satellites of its own**; this is good for our art scene.

(b) It brought a small number of art collectors from New York and other places to DC instead of the other way around and I think they were pleased.

(c) It broke through the art apathy of the *Washington Post*, even if it was the typical **snarkellist diatribe of Philip Kennicott** (did you notice that I've just invented a new word?) Note to the WaPo: Next time send Michael O'Sullivan please.

(d) It brought cool, new (and even snarkier) **art bloggers to DC**.

(e) It was a key element in getting the immensely talented **Victoria F. Gaitán** hooked up with Conner Contemporary.

(f) It will prove to be the launching pad for **Wilmer Wilson IV's** art career and I'm betting that several other unrepresented artists will be picked up by galleries.

(g) It got semi-naked people into the Skyline Hotel's pool - that's tame by Miami standards, but a first for a Washington art event.

(e)merge 2012 coming up...