Emerging Again: D.C.'s (e)merge Goes Into Its Second Year

By Matt **Smith** on October 11, 2012

Last year's preview night at (e)merge was a big, ruckus party. Amidst the large crowds it was often difficult to navigate the hallways between exhibitors, and the wait for the elevators always seemed impossibly long. While it may have been loads of fun for those of us sipping PBRs by the pool, perusing and buying artwork that evening seemed to require a bit more resolve and determination. This year, the second for (e)merge, the crowds on preview night were noticeably thinned, particularly among the younger set who were likely turned off by the $45 admission price ($60 at the door). The new cover charge seemed like a calculated move by organizers, one of a handful of changes that made this year's event seem more streamlined and manageable for exhibitors and visitors alike. Whether these changes translated into more sales is anybody's guess, but sales may not be the right metric to measure the success of (e)merge. At least not yet. – *Matthew Smith, Washington, D.C. contributor (All photos by Matthew except where indicated)*

Chajana denHarder performing *Singularity* (Artist Platform). Photo by Tony Wilson

When I spoke to a few of the galleries returning to the fair for a second year, all of them were eager to point out that they were at least equally motivated by something beside the bottom line. The folks at Hilger BROT Kunstalle, for instance, told me that they've always supported emerging artists, emerging scenes, and emerging fairs like (e)merge, or Pulse during its startup days. Similarly, Kevin Havelton of Aureus Contemporary told the Post, "We like the area because you have an intellectual community here…I may make more money in Miami, but the conversation there is somewhat diminished."

Looking around the ground floor of the Capitol Skyline Hotel, where independent artist projects were located, it was easy to imagine that conversation was in fact valued over commerce. On Thursday night, Chajanaden Harder's performance *Singularity*, pictured above, was followed by Andrew Wodzianski *Self Portrait as Ishmael*, in which the artist floated adrift for 36 hours on a coffin in the pool, recreating the ordeal of Herman Mellville's protagonist in the novel Moby Dick. I'm willing to surmise that making a sale was the last thing on the artists' minds, but their participation, and that of artists like them, has quickly become an integral part of (e)merge.

Works by Alex Podesta (Artist Platform)

Work by David B. Smith (Artist Platform)

Work by Ryan Carr Johnson and Samuel Scharf (Artist Platform)

Work by Allison Reimus, NAP #88 (Artist Platform)

Work by Magnolia Laurie (Artist Platform)

Work by Si Jae Byun (Artist Platform)

Work by Adrian Loving (Artist Platform)

Performative installation by Mandy Cano Villalobos (Artist Platform)

Work by Romas Astraukas with Flying Rooster Contemporary Projects (Gallery Platform)

Work by Jeff Depner with Aureus Contemporary and Johnny Lu with Asymmetric (Gallery Platform)

Work by Jeff Depner with Aureus Contemporary (Gallery Platform)

Work by Conner Backman with Mixed Greens (Gallery Platform)

Work by Alejandro Diaz Ayala with Aureus Contemporary (Gallery Platform)

Works by Jimmy Miracle with Washington Project for the Arts (Gallery Platform)

Work by Cheryl Pope with Contemporary Wing (Gallery Platform)

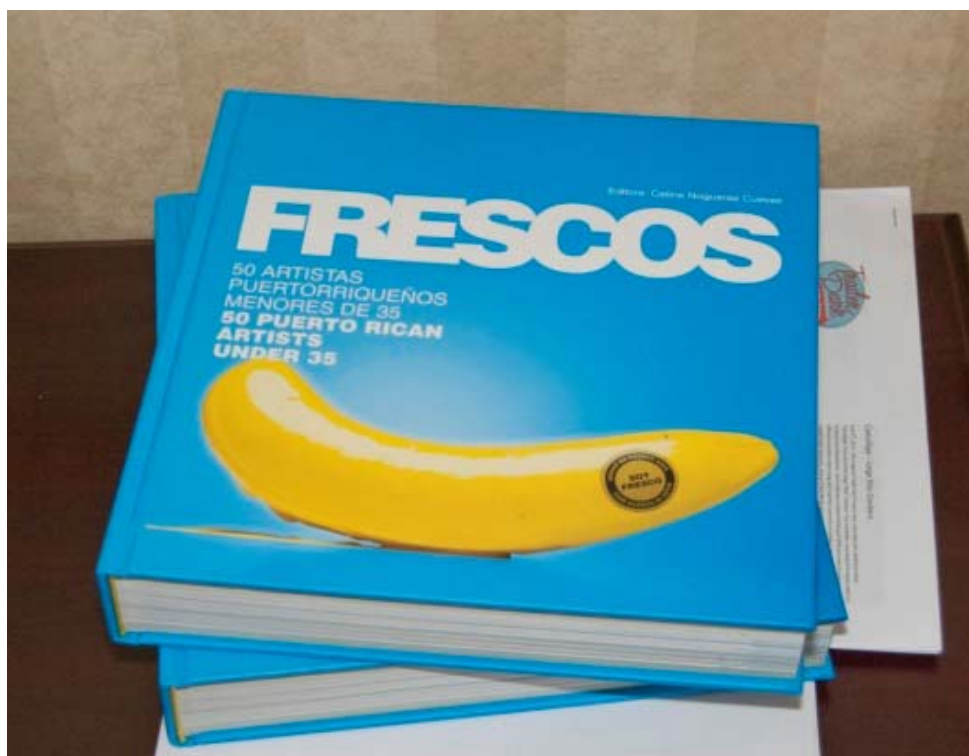Work by Hedieh Havanshir Ilchi (NAP #87, #100) with Contemporary Wing (Gallery Platform)

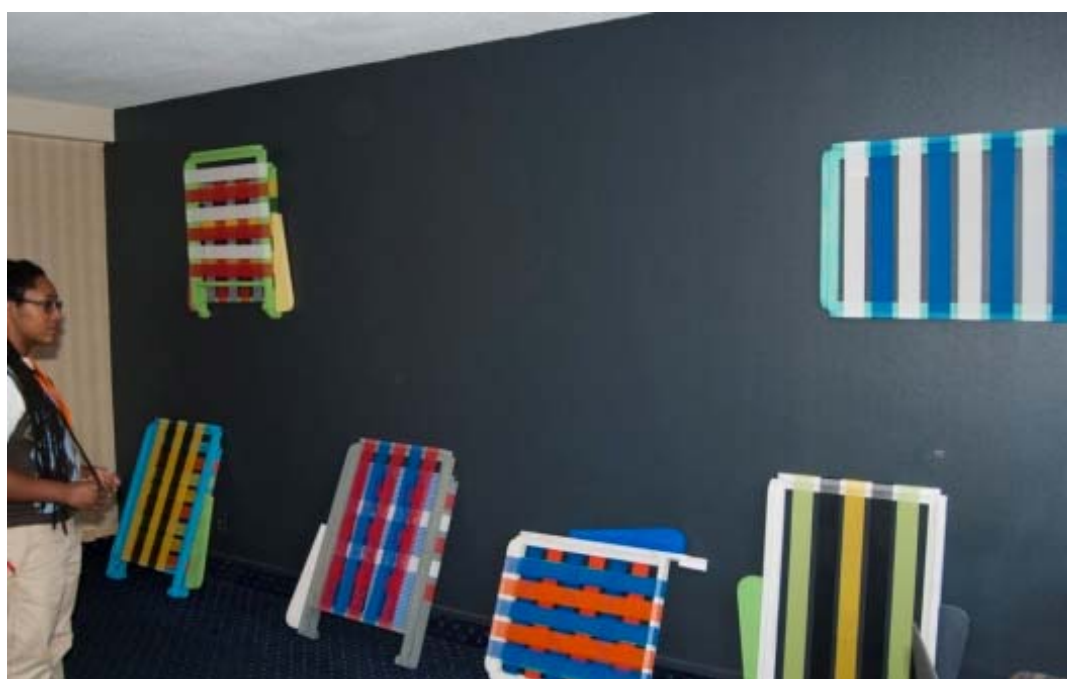Work by Katherine Mann with Project 4 (Gallery Platform)

Work by Omar Velazquez with Trailer Park Proyects (Gallery Platform)

Works by Rafael Miranda with Trailer Park Proyects (Gallery Platform)

Reading materials at Trailer Park Proyects (Gallery Platform)

Works by Patrick McDonough with G Fine Art (Gallery Platform)

Works by Andrew Kozlowski with Transformer (Gallery Platform)

Work by Victoria Fu with Flashpoint (Gallery Platform)