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## How (e)merge Landed Ai Weiwei for Its Vetting Committee

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In a nice score for D.C.'s (e)merge art fair, **Ai Weiwei** has agreed to serve on the annual event's vetting committee. Ai, whose political activism in China has made him one of the most high-profile artists working today, will evaluate each online submission. Hirshhorn assistant curator **Mika Yoshitake** and Rebuild Foundation director **Jeffreen Hayes** join him on the committee.

Now in its fourth year, (e)merge has always featured a working artist on the vetting committee. While previous choices, including Chicago-based **Jefferson Pinder** and

Brooklyn-based **Shinique Smith**, were hardly no-names, Ai Weiwei marks something of a stature bump. "We are thrilled about it," (e)merge director **Jamie Smith** says. "I think it's a good match for Washington, D.C. It's a very international city, and I think it makes sense for him to have input in the contemporary art scene here. I think it's going to be very inspiring for many emerging artists to have him reviewing their projects."

Smith says she delivered the invitation to Ai Weiwei through Yoshitake, who worked with the artist on his 2012 [retrospective](#) at the Hirshhorn. "Mika was gracious enough to extend the invitation, and he was gracious enough to accept it," she says. "I think we've been very fortunate since the very first year of (e)merge that exciting contemporary artists understand what the fair is about. Having Ai Weiwei on board this year is absolutely helping us with our mission."

Calls for submissions went out two days ago for this year's (e)merge, which will again be at the Capitol Skyline Hotel in October. Smith says the fair received about 300 applications last year and 40 artist projects are typically accepted. The Phillips Collection will also award an Emerging Artist Prize, as it did in 2012.