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## Four Artists to See at the Third Annual (e)merge Art Fair, Opening Tonight

By Kriston Capps  
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The [\(e\)merge Art Fair](#), now in its third year, opens tonight at the Capitol Skyline Hotel, the D.C. home base for art collectors **Don** and **Mera Rubell** of Miami. Just as last year, there's a satellite fair, the [D.C. Fine Art Photography Fair](#), and a [packed schedule](#) of [performance art](#) at the main event. The Emerging Art Prize, however, is something new.

In a minor violation of separation of church and state, the Phillips Collection will grant the new Emerging Art Prize during this weekend's fair. For a museum to deliberate so directly in the commercial market—Phillips director **Dorothy Kosinski** and curators **Klaus Ottmann** and **Vesela Stretenovic** will select a winner from the works on view in the commercial showcase—is a little unseemly.

No one ever asks me to jury these things, but last year, I picked [Conor Backman as best in show](#). This year, I've got some more suggestions. Look out for these artists, Phillips Collection staffers:

**Armando López Bircann:** The standout at "[Academy 2013](#)," Connersmith's annual survey of area art-school artists, López Bircann's sculptural performance remixed the "architecture of **Zaha Hadid**, the fashion of Viktor & Rolf, and the ACME flying suits of Wile E. Coyote." He's also part of Animals + Fire, whose [cofounder Sheldon Scott believes](#) that there's a D.C. approach to performance art that's every bit as unique as mambo sauce or harDCore.

**Benjamin Andrew:** "Chronoecology Corps" is an immersive performance piece that Andrew plans to stage throughout the fair. Collecting field data by asking viewers to fiddle with instruments and sculpture is one way that Andrew, who plays the role of some sort of chronologically displaced sociologist, interacts with his audience. The idea is that Andrew (and assistants) hail from the 23rd century, scientists sent back in time to study our world. If it's subtle, you might not notice he's even there, like a proper live experiment. Or it could come off like a bad holodeck episode on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

**Kirsty Little:** If my Instagram feed is any indication, the aerials phenomenon isn't disappearing from D.C. anytime soon. While swinging from silk ribbons appears to be both hobby and exercise for my gal pals, Little aims to turn it into an art form. I'm highly suspicious of any artistic practice that depends entirely on one strategy, whether that's [Pointillism](#) or trapeze. I suppose "Overload" could work, and in any case, it will be difficult to miss the artist suspended in the air.

**Alex Braden:** "Outside and Play" is the sort of performance that **Bluebrain** might dream up—they, or maybe **The Flaming Lips**. Braden has commissioned a number of musicians to take up stations throughout the fair and play instruments. They're all playing parts of a Braden composition, but in isolation. Viewers (or listeners) can listen to the whole via headphones, but viewers and musicians alike may only experience one part at a time. So many variables make it impossible for any viewer to experience the whole work. The real potential of the piece is that each station comes into its own.