

# The Washington Post

## (E)merge art fair, Ai Weiwei top October art highlights

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The art month officially begins with the return of the (e)merge art fair to the Capitol Skyline Hotel. In its second year, the fair founded by Leigh Conner and Jamie Smith of the Connersmith gallery and art-fair veteran Helen Allen (founder of the Pulse Art Fair) brings together more than 80 galleries and artists who will set up shop throughout the retro, Morris Lapidus-designed hotel. Last year, the biggest challenge for (e)merge exhibitors was thinking outside the standard white-walled box — and working in small, dark hotel rooms lined with striped, sulfur-colored wallpaper. This year, artists and organizers say, they're learning to better work within the (idiosyncratic) space. That means a surprising number of performance-art pieces around the hotel, including one work in the hotel pool. Also on tap this year is a pop-up Sri Lankan restaurant, hosted by Montserrat House. Get a sense of the art fair's performance work by watching the video above, one of last year's strong (e)merge performances by veteran artist J.J. McCracken.

Fans of conceptual artist Ai Weiwei are counting down the hours till the opening of "Ai Weiwei: According to What?" The Chinese artist's first North American retrospective opens Sunday at the the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. (The museum already has on display his work "Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads.") As The New York times reported, Chinese officials were holding the artist's passport, leaving Weiwei unable to visit the United States for the opening and other events. You can still mark your calendars for Sunday's 2 p.m. exhibit walk-through with the museum's assistant curator of contemporary art.

On Saturday night, art aficionados looking to chill after a long day at (e)merge should head over to the Fridge, where a reception will be held for exhibitions featuring work by graffiti artist Asad "Ultra" Walker and painter Laura Elkins, who's known for her self-portraits in the guise of First Ladies. Another October gallery event you'll want to mark on your calendar is the 10/20 reception for the Arlington Arts Center's "Fall Solos," an annual exhibition in which each of six artists is given an entire gallery to play in.

Of course, the other big fall museum retrospective (next to Ai Weiwei's) is "Roy Lichtenstein: A Retrospective." Organized by the Art Institute of Chicago and Tate Modern, London, in association with the National Gallery of Art, the showcase of the famous pop artist — known for his bold, cartoon-like paintings — opens Oct. 14 at the NGA's East Building.

Art isn't just about looking either. A handful of cool artist talks are also lined up this month, offering insights into some contemporary exhibitions on view around town. Those appearances include photographer Satomi Shirai at Heiner Contemporary (Oct. 6 at 4 p.m.); video artist Jeroen Eisinga at the Hirshhorn (Oct. 10 at 7 p.m.); and photographer Charlotte Dumas at the Corcoran Gallery of Art (Oct. 18 at 7 p.m.).