



1. Mera Rubell called the message behind Wilmer Wilson IV's "Bandages/I Voted" performance piece "genius," in light of DC's continuing campaign for statehood.

2. Jonathan Monaghan takes a larger-than-life perspective with "The Dauphin."

3. Jenny Sidhu Mullins' "The Dew Love Dharma Tent" combines Indian traditions with commercial fast-food imagery.

4. Laurel Lukaszewski gives good flow with her porcelain "The Path of Water."

Collect Call

The Washington-area art scene has witnessed a renaissance of boundary-pushing, genre-defining artists. We share this year's picks of the top 10 talents to watch, and the works to start collecting right now. | *By Brittney Dunkins, Susan Hunsinger, Adrienne Messeca and Lindsey Brenner* |

1. The Showman

As a first-time live performer, 22-year-old artist **Wilmer Wilson IV** became the unlikely hit of this fall's (e)merge Art Fair. The newcomer makes statements with common objects like spoons, paper bags and Post-its in his art. At the fair, Wilson spent an entire day applying and removing a roll of "I Voted" stickers all over his body, a spectacle that not only drew a crowd, but won him accolades—and patronage—from arts connoisseur Mera Rubell, along with (e)merge directors Leigh Conner, Helen Allen and Jamie Smith.

Still a student at Howard University, the young Virginia native seeks to explore what he terms "social camouflage" with everyday things. "It was great to experience the reaction of the audience and interact with them," Wilson says. The success earned him a spot in the *gogo emerging art projects at Conner Contemporary (connercontemporary.com), a program that provides up-and-coming artists with a venue to show their work. "At this point, I couldn't bring myself to do anything but art," he says.

2. The Game Changer

As an obsessed teen gamer, **Jonathan Monaghan** decided to ditch the controller and start creating. By the time he arrived at New York Institute of Technology, the designer, who works in 3-D animation, was being featured in the very textbooks he was studying. Blending the fantastic and surreal, his narratives have attracted renowned collectors, such as Fred Ognibene (see Radar Home), and earned him bragging rights as a winner of the Washington Project for the Arts' Experimental Media Series. This January, the 25-year-old, former Hamiltonian Gallery fellow will take a break from artist-in-residence programs for a solo show at the Curator's Office (curatorsoffice.com).

3. The Mystic

Ritual sacrifice and vending machines aren't a usual match. But for **Jenny Sidhu Mullins**, an artist who spins spirituality into her paintings and interactive sculptures, the link was clear. She paints animals as metaphors for humans bound by consumerism. The Austin-raised, DC-based artist, will show with Hamiltonian Gallery (hamiltoniangallery.com) at Art Basel Miami Beach this month. Her pieces are inspired by the ancient practices of *thangka* and *mughal* painting studied during a Fulbright spent in India. She explores mysticism, chakras and reincarnation, catching important eyes, including Department of State Curator Virginia Shore, who acquired her work to hang at the U.S. Embassy in Mumbai.

4. The Globalist

Before sculptor **Laurel Lukaszewski** decided to pursue art, she worked in cultural exchange, living on a rural Japanese island, then spent nine years navigating U.S.-Japan relations. Those experiences inform her delicate cherry blossom sculptures which, in her words, "take a piece of DC and a piece of Japan and tie them together." The Far-East aficionado's work nods to the tea-ceremony concept of *ichi-go ichi-e*, or capturing a moment in time. She produces seemingly weightless porcelain and stoneware confections that look fleeting, despite their heavy structure. Lukaszewski's newest solo exhibition mounts at The Art Registry (theartregistrygroup.com) on Dec. 3.

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