

CITY LIGHTS

April 9 Bright Eyes



Photo by Shawn Brackbill

Middle age sounds good on Conor Oberst. Unburdened by blinding expectations and weighty comparisons to the singer-songwriters of yesteryear, Oberst is enjoying a steady second wind. It must be liberating to no longer be tasked with saving his generation. After pausing Bright Eyes in the early 2010s to focus on other projects, he released *Payola* in 2015, the second album from his politically minded punk band Desaparecidos. *Payola* updated the band's George W. Bush McMansion blues of 2002's *Read Music/Speak Spanish*, maintaining its barbed spirit with a world-weary wisdom. In 2019, he teamed up with Phoebe Bridgers to become superduo Better Oblivion Community Center—the former boy wonder now playing the role of veteran collaborator to an extraordinary new talent. And in 2020, he circled back to Bright Eyes for *Down in the Weeds*, *Where the World Once Was*, a comeback record containing all of the warmth and intimacy of his earlier work but without the melodrama often associated with it. Fill in your own mid-career Dylan comeback album comparison, if you must. Following his upcoming visit to the Anthem, Oberst will play the meme-inducing Las Vegas festival, *When We Were Young*, which culls any vaguely “emo” band that was successful (Dashboard Confessional, Paramore, All-American Rejects) and/or sounds like they might have been successful (Car Seat Headrest) in the early aughts. I was genuinely surprised to see Bright Eyes on the bill, not only for their stylistic differences, but because while Oberst might be best known for representing youthful angst, he's not one to linger on the past. He's still saying plenty worth listening to and will likely continue to do so, even *When We Are Old(er)*. *Bright Eyes perform at 8 p.m. on April 9 at the Anthem, 901 Wharf St. SW. theanthemdc.com. \$46-\$76.*

—Matthew Siblo

April 9 Made Conference

What does the future of local arts, music, and technology hold? Find out at this year's Made Conference, a District-centered networking event where art meets business, and where seasoned professionals share their industry chops with up-and-comers. Presented by local talent think tank MadeInTheDMV, the conference brings together industry experts in art, music, technology, and culture, and invites them to give back to their communities by lending career advice and life lessons to emerging entrepreneurs and artists. Attendees are encouraged to exchange views, engage in active dialogue, and make lasting connections. Angela Byrd, creator of MadeInTheDMV, has assembled a talented and diverse roster of creatives and community leaders to participate in the conference.

Notable panelists include DJs and media personalities such as Little Bacon Bear, DJ Quicksilver, DJ Blustar, DJ Marauder, and P Stew; successful businesses the Museum, & Pizza, Songbyrd, and Fat Munchiez; leading news outlets and journalists including DC REALTIME NEWS, HOODZ ND NEWZ, *The DMV Daily*, and Anthony Tilghman; and popular musicians Killa Cal, Big Flock, Noochie, and Carolyn Malachi. Also scheduled to appear is filmmaker and videographer Alexa Acosta, the owner of Prestige Film Works and one of the top hip-hop directors in the music industry. The keynote speaker for the conference is Tuma Basa, who oversees Black music and culture at YouTube. Basa has experience working at Spotify, BET, MTV, and Revolt. The conference takes place at the DC Dream Center, a social services organization home to community-based programs, after-school activities, tutoring, and mentoring. *Made Conference takes place from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on April 9 at DC Dream Center, 2826 Q St. SE. madeinthedmv.com. Free with registration.*

—Sidney Thomas



Art by Cory Wiley

Courtesy of MadeInTheDMV

Through May 7 *ruined on a riverbank*

Joey Enriquez is a runner. It's something they structure their days around, oftentimes taking to the trails along the Potomac River. But their jogs have yielded more than just a good workout. While spending time along the river, Enriquez became interested in the geological landscape, frequently finding random bricks scattered along the riverbank. It was this that inspired their latest exhibit, *ruined on a riverbank*, presented as part of Enriquez's fellowship with Hamiltonian Artists. The exhibit consists of three sculptures made from bricks and other materials they have collected, paintings made from matter sourced from the earth, plaster brick casts, and annotated

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reproductions of archival technical drawings of D.C. neighborhoods. These pieces come together to paint a picture of contemporary issues in the District, such as gentrification, city identity, statehood, and architectural history. There is also a more hidden and nuanced theme: labor. “It’s easy to ignore the fact that I’m out here injuring myself carrying these bricks, or that people in the recent past—incarcerated people, enslaved people—have had to manufacture these objects,” Enriquez says. “There are deeper themes of labor that are separate from the general human history of the city itself.” As for what’s exactly being ruined on the riverbank? According to Enriquez, there are many different objects of ruin. There’s the physical ruin, as the labor involved in the construction of the exhibit was exhausting. There’s the geological ruin of the bricks. And there’s the ruin of livelihood, says Enriquez. “The title is referential to critical, divisive, issues happening in the city that are literally ruining people’s lives, livelihoods, business; ruining histories; ruining the fact that certain populations have existed in certain areas for centuries or decades.” ruined on a riverbank is on display through May 7 at Hamiltonian Artists, 1353 U St. NW. Free. —Hannah Docter-Loeb



“and i stopped on the trail twice (replicated only twice)” by Joey Enriquez

Courtesy of Hamiltonian Artists



2021 National Cannabis Festival

Photo by Doug Van Sant

Khalifa, Ghostface Killah, D.C.’s own go-go superstars the Backyard Band, Lettuce, DuPont Brass, Shamans of Sound, Golden Browne, Cramer, and DJ Farrah Flosscott. Headliner Wiz Khalifa is the perfect choice—in addition to being a prolific rapper, he oversees Khalifa Kush, which produces high-quality weed products. On Sunday, festivities move to Echostage for the National Cannabis Championship, an award ceremony that recognizes the best home growers in the mid-Atlantic. The event is sponsored by local connoisseur Joe Tierney, and will feature performances by hip-hop legend Slick Rick and DJ Footwerk. Tierney will also serve as a judge for the highly competitive contest. “I have spent the last six years proselytizing the criteria that will guide consumers to exceptional cannabis through my blog,” he tells *City Paper*. “Being a judge at NCC represents a culmination of my life’s work and I am honored for the opportunity. Bring on the competition.” *The National Cannabis Festival runs from April 22 to April 24. Gates open at noon on April 23 at RFK Stadium, 2400 E. Capitol St. SE. nationalcannabisfestival.com. \$75. National Cannabis Policy Summit is free with registration; National Cannabis Championship costs \$55.* —Sidney Thomas

April 20 Juana Molina

Buenos Aires singer-songwriter Juana Molina has turned heads since the mid-’90s for mixing her breathy Spanish vocals and strummed guitar with looped sounds and effects generated by pedals and synthesizers. Since 2009, she’s usually employed bandmates to help create her ethereal soundscape of folk electronica. But during the pandemic, Molina was forced to return to making music alone, and vowed to create a live show with the same sort of improvisation that she engages in when she plays at home. Molina tells *City Paper* that previously, with her band, “the arrangements were fixed, and every night we played the same.” On this tour, Molina will “start a song as usual, and then [I] don’t know exactly how it’ll finish.” Molina is no stranger to taking chances. She first rose to fame as a popular comedy actress with her own TV show in Argentina in the ’90s, but after taking maternity leave, decided that the guitar playing she first started at age 5 interested her more. Beginning with her recently reissued second album, aptly titled *Segundo*, Molina has added chirping birds, chiming bells, fireworks, unusual guitar tunings, and warped wordless vocals to her recordings. In 2019, she released *Forfin*, an uptempo EP featuring punk renditions of her compositions. The record was inspired by the time her band had to play a festival without some of their instruments, which had been misplaced by an airline. *Forfin* was followed by *ANRMAL*, a 2020 live album that included raw versions of both her avant-indie folk and punk songs. Though she won’t be offering new songs on this tour, Molina promises renditions of her previously released songs will be “so different from the recordings that they could be considered as new.” *Juana Molina performs at 8 p.m. on April 20 at Union Stage, 740 Water St. SW. unionstage.com. \$20. Proof of vax required.* —Steve Kiviat

April 22-24 National Cannabis Festival

Four twenty ... two, three, and four, blaze it? Close enough. On these days this April, weed aficionados will flock to D.C. for the sixth annual National Cannabis Festival. This year’s fest is bigger than ever; attractions include a new culinary pavilion and an expanded calendar featuring three days of events. The National Cannabis Policy Summit takes place on Friday, April 22, at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. Lawmakers and advocates will convene to discuss important cannabis policy issues, addressing financial, environmental, and legal concerns within the industry. The conversation is especially pertinent to the District right now, as the Council mulls over banning the marijuana gift economy in favor of licensed medical businesses. The big show is slated for Saturday—an all-day affair at RFK Stadium that celebrates progress on cannabis legalization while also calling for an end to its criminalization and the war on drugs. Caroline Phillips is the founder and executive producer of NCF, which is now the largest single-day ticketed cannabis gathering in the U.S. “I’m excited about all of the new experiences we are bringing to the community this year,” says Phillips. “I can’t wait for folks to experience all of the programs in our education pavilions, the arts and crafts in the exhibitor fair, and all of the entertainment on the main stage.” Even non-smokers will enjoy the lineup of great musicians, with scheduled performances by Wiz

Through May 13 Exploring Hiroshige and His Influence on Social Media



Courtesy of Embassy of Japan

When you think of a social media influencer, your first thought is probably not of a centuries-old artist specializing in *ukiyo-e*, or the Japanese art of woodblock printing and painting. *Exploring Hiroshige and His Influence on Social Media* at the Japanese Information and Culture Center suggests that Utagawa Hiroshige, one of the last masters of this technique, might have rubbed off on today’s Instagrammers. Dozens of his stunning works of landscapes and city scenes are featured here, and all reward close inspection. Shops and houses throw their doors open to reveal the people sleeping or eating within, farmers and animals work in fields, and oceans or sunsets glimmer in the background. Mount Fuji frequently looms in the frame, either imposingly breaking out of the picture’s frame or off in the distance, and the plethora of delicate, twisty, or flowering trees makes clear why this exhibit is part of the National Cherry Blossom Festival. Nearby placards highlight aesthetic principles that Hiroshige employed, like diagonal lines that cut across the frame or linear perspective, as well as social media photography that uses these same techniques. These signs act as an instructional guide to photography, and are also an insightful way to understand and appreciate the composition of artworks in general. The photos were gathered from an open call for submissions. The democracy of submissions, coupled with the educational aspect of the exhibit, drives home the idea that anyone can become a better photographer and learn to envision things