



THE FIVE RISING ARTISTS YOU MUST KNOW IN 2016

From Rachel Rossin to Emily Mae Smith, this handful of up and coming talents are set on reshaping our view of reality.

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As always, *W*'s annual Art Issue has one eye on the landscape of contemporary art today, and one on its promising future. Here, we have selected five artists who are already making work that will matter for years to come.



Rachel Rossin's *Abandoned Pool*, 2016; Rossin, in her studio.
Abandoned Pool: Courtesy of ZieherSmith, New York; Rossin: Mark Hartman.

Rachel Rossin

Still in their beta stages, virtual reality headsets have already become the art world's accessory du jour, a must for any forward-looking biennial. Although the artist Rachel Rossin, 29, is known for her innovative VR installations, she admits that the fashionable new medium is still in a nascent stage. "And the headsets are ugly," she adds. Rossin should know: She is designing what she hopes will be a more aesthetically pleasing headset, complete with a mirrored surface. In two shows last year at Signal gallery, in Brooklyn, and ZieherSmith, in Manhattan, Rossin bridged the gap between the white cube and the floating, limitless digital world she had devised by showing sculptures and semi-abstract paintings that represented the imaginary world inside the headset. "I feel uncomfortable with my work being called 'surrealism,'" Rossin says, after some critics referred to her pieces as Dalí-esque. Still, she admits that outside of an art-historical context, that is exactly what VR is: surreal. (Just think of the times you've witnessed someone stumbling about an empty gallery, hooked up to a long wire, like some blindfolded marionette.) "Right now I'm using sculpture and painting to address the gradient between the virtual and the real. But I have other things in progress that take that even further," she hints. "It's clunky, but eventually VR will be a medium in the canon." — Fan Zhong