

The Top Emerging Artists of 2016

Artsy Editorial

Among the more pervasive art-world narratives of 2016 was the downturn in the market for works by emerging artists. Market contractions may have limited the sheer number of new names bubbling up to surface this year in comparison to the last few. But this tempered pace also allowed for greater attention to be placed on the emerging artists of true quality and depth who gained traction in 2016—and it allowed a number of artists who have been working actively and slowly gaining recognition over several years to step up and strongly stake their claim as among those defining contemporary art today. Surveying this landscape, Artsy’s editors consulted a number of data sources, including UBS’s art news app Planet Art, and the insight of influential individuals to see who among these new and newly essential names proved a cut above the rest. Here, in no particular order, are the top emerging artists of this year.

Rachel Rossin

**B. 1987, WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA
LIVES AND WORKS IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK**

Rossin began experimenting with computer code at the tender age of age eight. And, recently, she has been hailed as one of the pioneers of the burgeoning artistic medium of virtual reality. The New York-based artist skillfully manipulates digital technology to create immersive environments where one might fall through the center of the world as gravity dissipates or drift through the artist’s digitally distorted home and studio like a ghost—all seen through the Oculus Rift headset, which she’s tinkered with since receiving a developer prototype before its official launch in spring 2016.

Rossin has been increasingly gaining traction following two well-received New York solo shows in 2015—“n=7 / The Wake in Heat of Collapse” at SIGNAL and “Lossy” at ZieherSmith—both of which featured virtual reality-based works, often in conversation with her paintings and sculptures. She was also selected as the New Museum’s first-ever virtual reality fellow, a program she wrapped up in 2016 under the purview of the museum’s incubator NEW INC.

“She’s one of those rare artists who is seemingly devoid of ego and pretension, who exudes genuine and uninhibited curiosity, and radiates warmth and light,” says Julia Kaganskiy, director of NEW INC. “I think this may be the reason why she’s able to move between worlds, contexts, and media so deftly, alternating between wielding a paintbrush or VR headset, and offering subtle but poignant images and observations that illuminate and inspire both vantage points.” Rossin’s work has continued to captivate audiences at the 2016 editions of SPRING/BREAK Art Show, NADA New York, UNTITLED, Miami Beach, and Seattle Art Fair; and during Art Basel in Miami Beach week, fair-goers visiting the brand new Faena Art Dome experienced her project commissioned by Artsy, using 360° projection to bring virtual reality out of the headset.

