

## Art World

### 14 Emerging Women Artists to Watch in 2017

Who runs the world?

Sarah Cascone, December 21, 2016



Catalina Ouyang, Tony Gum, Natalie Krim, Sara Cwynar, Baseera Khan, Tschabalala Self, Ann Hirsch, and Joana Ricou.

The following artists, from South Africa to South Brooklyn, have been responsible for some truly thought-provoking works this year.

artnet News is excited to see what they do next, as they expand their practices and get their first solo show, their first big grant, or their first public art showing at an art fair.

#### 1. Allana Clarke

A conceptual artist who combines performance, video, sculpture, and installation, Allana Clarke “investigates the construction of power politics as both an authoritative structure and an abstraction,” according to her website. In September, she staged a four-act immersive participatory performance piece, “Notes on Belonging to Boundaries” at Brooklyn’s FiveMyles, and stunned in a group exhibition at Chicago’s ACRE this summer.

#### 2. Claudia Comte

Swiss artist Claudia Comte was one of the highlights of the Public Art Fund’s annual summer group show at New York’s City Hall Park. Her piece in “The Language of Things,” *The Italian Bunnies*, consisted of monolithic polished marble sculptures that were at once elegantly abstract designs and cartoonish rabbit ears. Represented by Gladstone Gallery of New York and Berlin, Comte also appeared in the Public sector of Art Basel in Miami Beach in 2016, in addition to a solo show, “Catch the Tail by the Tiger,” at Berlin’s König Galerie. “Usually minimal art is very serious and kind of intellectual,” Comte told Interview in 2014. “I think I’m trying to imbue a bit of humor in these really strict and minimal shapes.”

#### 3. Jennifer Cronin

The recipient of not one but two Chicago-area solo shows in 2016, at I AM Logan Square Gallery and the University St. Francis Art Gallery in nearby Joliet, Jennifer Cronin paints and draws in hauntingly-realistic style. Inspired both by the city she calls home, with its areas of urban blight, and the banalities of her day job in customer service, selling tickets at the base of the former Sears Tower, her work, according to an artist’s statement, is about “chasing after the

mystery and complexity of our lives, and the fingerprints that we leave behind in this world.” Cronin has also been given a grant from the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation, which supports emerging artists. Her next series will respond to a recent trip to Newtok, a remote native Alaskan village.

#### 4. Sarah Cwynar

Sara Cwynar transforms every day objects into art. In 2016, Cwynar showed in “Greater New York” at MoMA PS1, and was one of two winners of the Baloise Art Prize at Art Basel, which comes with a purse of CHF 30,000 (\$31,000). Her video essay *Soft Film*, shown by New York’s Foxy Production (one of artnet News’s best booths of the fair), documents the artist’s eBay purchases. “I want to think about the affect of thrown away objects and use them to open up to other questions about the lives of images over time, about cycles of capitalism, and about feminism,” said Cwynar in a statement.

#### 5. Tony Gum

Perhaps South Africa’s most glamorous Instagram star (and the “coolest girl in Cape Town” according to *Vogue*), Tony Gum made her stateside debut at PULSE New York in March, where Christopher Moller Gallery of Capetown showed a booth of her work; a second appearance followed at the Miami Beach edition in December. Gum’s self portraits blend elements of her African heritage with images from popular culture, referencing methods of carrying water by posing with Coca-Cola bottles on her head. “There are different types of black bodies that need to be represented,” she told artnet News.

#### 6. Ann Hirsch

Ann Hirsch plumbs late 1990s internet chatroom lingo for fodder for her art, which reflects upon coming of age with the internet. She had exhibitions in 2016 at Brooklyn’s American Medium and Boston’s MIT List Visual Art Center, while the Institute of Contemporary Art at MECA in Portland, Maine, showcased a decade’s worth of her work in immersive multi-media installations in the solo show “Sharing Love.” The artist, who was given a Rhizome commission for her 2013 performance piece *Playground*, staged at New York’s New Museum, is interested in issues of sexuality, feminism, and pop culture, and does a fascinating job reminding us just how quickly and dramatically the online world has changed. “The feminine side is starting to take over and dominate the Internet,” Hirsch told *New York* magazine. “That’s Web 2.0, showing yourself, your real identity, pics, being willing to say whatever the hell you want.”

#### 7. Baseera Khan

The Brooklyn-based, Texas-raised artist makes work concerned with issues of hybrid cultural identities, integration, and alienation relating to South Asia’s partitions. Khan’s art often involves scripts based on accumulated personal artifacts such as clothing, family photographs, and boxes left behind. “These materials often lack essential information,” said Khan to *BOMB*, “which become unmoored along with the displacement of its person. Literature and music are used to form and fill in narrative.” After a 2015 artist in residence at the Lower Manhattan Cultrual Council, Khan will have her first New York solo show at Participant, Inc. in 2017.

#### 8. Natalie Krim

New York-based artist Natalie Krim had her first Los Angeles solo show in 2016, at Little Big Man Gallery. Titled “Because I Love You, But You’re Not Here,” the exhibition featured her erotic illustrations of women in lingerie, simple line drawings that Krim considers self-portraits.

She would steer you away, however of thinking about her work as part of some larger desire to reappropriate the male gaze. “I am a feminist, but it has nothing to do with my work,” Krim told Autre. “I’m not trying to make a statement with it, I’m just showing you my life.”

#### 9. Sarah Meyohas

The inventor of BitchCoin, Sarah Meyohas had a busy 2016, putting her Wharton School business education to good use at a solo show at New York’s 303 Gallery in which she traded stocks and marked their subsequent rise and fall in live time using oil stick on canvas. (A move that was not appreciated by her broker Charles Schwab.) In August, she turned the Bell Labs’ Holmdel Complex in New Jersey into a temporary flower factory for her project *Roses at Bell*, which sought to create a data set based on the different shapes and colors of petals from 10,000 roses.

#### 10. Esmaa Mohamoud

In 2016, Toronto’s Esmaa Mohamoud finished a masters in fine arts from Ontario College of Art and Design and had her first solo show, at Toronto’s YYY Gallery, all before the age of 24. Titled “#000000 Violence,” the exhibition uses basketball as a starting point for larger conversations. “I’m using the realm of athletics to speak to issues of black masculinity; how violence and athletics go hand-in-hand in black culture,” she told the Fader of the works, 30-pound concrete casts of under-inflated basketballs.

#### 11. Catalina Ouyang

Catalina Ouyang is interested, according to her artist’s statement, in “where my experience as a Chinese-American woman meshes with histories of cultural and sexual colonization, [and] where my family’s transplanted history aligns with a larger narrative of displacement and lost communication.” All that is at the forefront of “an elegy for Marco,” her current solo at Millitzer Gallery in St. Louis, which examines the history of colonialism in China through the lens of Marco Polo. This year also saw Ouyang participate in artist-in-residence programs at the OBRAS Foundation (Evora Monte, Portugal) and the Atlantic Center for the Arts (New Smyrna Beach, Florida).



Catalina Ouyang, *Eating a Banana Alone in Studio* (still). Courtesy of Catalina Ouyang.

#### 12. Joana Ricou

Art and science mix in the practice of New York-based Portuguese artist Joana Ricou, who is

interested the complexity of human identity and how that connects to our biological make-up. Her work, which was featured this year in a solo show, “Group Selfie,” at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Science, includes unique “Bellybutton Portraits” of her subjects, colorful photos of microbial cultures grown from a sample taken from each person’s stomach. Another project, “Surface Markers,” involves documenting the objects people around the world carry on their person, which Ricou likens to molecules on human cells. “What is most striking to me are the similarities across the pictures,” she told artnet News. “Adults across many countries and ages share very similar ‘markers:’ keys, wallet and cellphone—it does not matter whether you are in Nepal, New York, or São Paulo.”

### 13. Tschabalala Self

Tschabalala Self got her MFA in painting and printmaking at Yale in 2015, and quickly garnered two solo shows, “Gut Feelings” at New York’s Thierry Goldberg, and “The Function” at Italy’s T293 Naples. She was also the youngest artist featured in “Mal Maison,” the Ashton Cooper-curated group show of women artists’ representations of the female form at New York’s Maccarone. Upcoming in 2017, Self has a residency and solo show at London’s Parasol Unit. Says the artist of her work in a statement: “Collective fantasies surround the Black body, and have created a cultural niche in which exists our contemporary understanding of Black femininity. My practice is dedicated to naming this phenomenon.”

### 14. Adrienne Elise Tarver

The subject of the just-closed solo show, “Stories of Shadows,” at Brooklyn’s Victori + Mo, Adrienne Elise Tarver has created a fascinating series of work, all stemming from a found photograph of a black woman in glasses. Tarver has invented an entire life and persona for her unknown muse, who she has christened “Vera Otis,” exploring issues of voyeurism through video “vignettes” and dioramas. In an era where the concept of privacy is fading fast, Tarver’s work calls into question the divide between appearances and reality. “it doesn’t matter who she is,” Tarver told Art Zealous of Otis. “With us both being black women, she has served as a vessel or surrogate for me to ask larger questions or tell stories that relate to me and my experiences or the experiences of women in my life.”