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## Artist of the Week: Sarah Bowling

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Sarah Bowling (b. 1993) lives and works in her native home of Denver, Colorado. Bowling received her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2016. She is represented by RULE Gallery and will have her first solo exhibition with RULE in October 2018 at their Marfa, TX gallery. Bowling is an object maker, painter, and concrete queen.



Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do.  
I grew up in the beautiful state of Colorado.

I moved to Chicago in 2012 to attend SAIC for my BFA. After graduating, I moved back to Denver. I am interested in the constructs of desire and how desires stem from absence. Once a desire is achieved, a new one replaces the old and we find ourselves in this perpetual state of longing. I am exploring the phases of intimacy and vulnerability within relationships and the power dynamics that follow. I am a lover of doughnuts, skiing, the color pink, and cats.



How did your interest in art begin?

I have loved making things since I can remember. When I was seven, I put on every shirt I owned until I looked like a snowman, walked downstairs, and stood in the middle of the room while my family watched curiously. I peeled off each shirt, one by one, then left the room without saying anything. I also used to line up hundreds of cups on the floor around my parent's house and fill them with water. That is art right? It wasn't until high school though that I really became passionate about my work. I had an extremely supportive art teacher who made me realize art is what I want to do with my life.





**What materials do you use in your work and what is your process like?**

I am always collecting things: phrases I hear throughout the day, hairy materials, old wallpaper, fence posts, nudie pics, etc. I often use an object as a starting point and then work off of that, mixing in found and created objects. It's important to me to have an emotional connection to my objects so I make sure each one is lived with or used in my personal life before making an appearance in my work. Beach balls are in everything I'm making right now. Their lifespan is beautiful. When I first blow them up, they're so plump and foggy from the moisture in my breath. Eventually, the air escapes and the balls become limp and wrinkle. I have a love/hate relationship with concrete. It is so heavy and a pain to pour, but it's such a sexy material and somehow finds its way into all my work. I started weight lifting three years ago because I couldn't lift the 80lb bags of concrete at Home Depot. You get more bang for your buck if you buy 80lb bags instead of 60lb bags.





**What is your favorite part about living and working in Denver?**

I can go skiing in the morning and spend the afternoon in my studio. When I get frustrated with my work, I can be in the mountains in an hour and find new inspiration. The colors nature produces here are ridiculous. I try to watch the sunset everyday. The people here make it home though. Everyone is always friendly and passionate about their own interests. The art community is vibrant and welcoming. It's exciting to see Denver expanding so quickly and experience the growth within the art scene. New galleries and projects are constantly popping up.

**What are some of the best or worst reactions you have gotten as a result of your work?**

A professor told me my painting was so bad that I should light it on fire.

**What was the last exhibition you saw that stuck out to you?**

I recently saw Drive In: Personal Space, a pop up exhibition by Black Cube. Black Cube is a nomadic museum based in Denver. For Drive In: Personal Space, they invited 13 artists to use their vehicles as exhibition space and the show was held in a construction lot. The work was fantastic but what stuck with me most was the setting and environment. I stood in the middle of the lot, feeling nauseous from all the car exhaust and blindingly bright work lights and felt excited. I'd never experienced art in such a realistic environment. The art world has become so focused on the white walls and a clean gallery setting that the human experience and reality of the art is often lost.

**What is influencing your work right now?**

Watermelons. Pornography. Pool party aesthetics. Expectations of sexuality. My plants slowly dying. Things I've left behind. Flowers. Intimacy or lack of intimacy. Pumpkins. Vulnerability. Desire. Absence causing desire. Gender performativity. Online dating. Instability. Reality TV shows. Feeling uncomfortable. Nipple pasties. The tension created by things not fitting together. Nauseatingly bright colors.

**What do you want a viewer to walk away with after seeing your work? More questions, and a smile. Describe your current studio or workspace.**

I currently have a live/work space. My studio has floor to ceiling windows on one wall with a big tree out front which makes me feel less claustrophobic when I'm in there working all day. I found I work better in my own space opposed to large studio communities; I get distracted too easily. I also like being able to blast my music and dance without being worried someone will see me.



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**What artists are you interested in right now?**

There are so many! But here is a list of ten: Lara Schmitz, Mike Kelley, Eva Hesse, Jessica Stockholder, Tracey Emin, John Wesley, Sophy Naess, Louise Bourgeois, Cy Twombly, and Carroll Dunham.

**What do you collect?**

Everything. I will never turn down an object someone brings me or I see. My studio has boxes and boxes of things I've found. Recently, I've become obsessed with pool inflatables and beach balls so my studio looks like a deserted pool party/graveyard with concrete body parts scattered around