

The Top 15 Emerging Artists of 2015

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It took more than market momentum or critical acclaim to have a breakout year in 2015. As reflected by Eric N. Mack, Simon Denny, and Mira Dancy in the Film above, tragedies like Charlie Hebdo and big shills from Black Lives Matter to the legalization of gay marriage, have drawn artists to place renewed consideration into making work that resonates with not just the art world but the wider world, too. Here, we survey 15 of the most exciting practices this year, by artists who made great strides to cement themselves as part of the growing canon of contemporary art.



Yves Scherer

b. 1987, Solothurn, Switzerland. Lives and works in New York and Berlin.

The actress Emma Watson made a big splash in the art world in 2015—and not as the latest celebrity collector. Statues of the Harry Potter-star-cum-feminist-activist were seen worldwide, the work of post-internet art's fastest rising star, Scherer. "Closer," his debut solo show at Berlin's Guido W. Baudach, closed 10 days into the new year and launched Scherer on to exhibitions at Carl Kostyal in London, Salon Kennedy in Frankfurt, Exo Exo in Paris, and the Swiss Institute (SI) in New York. The mermaid Emma that anchored the SI show went on to Galerie Guido W. Baudach's Art Basel in Miami Beach booth, another Emma statue having been included in the Parcours section of Art Basel's hometown show during the summer (during which he also won the Swiss Art Award).

But the 28-year-old artist's output ranges far beyond various likenesses of Watson. "Scherer is a fascinating artist exploring how contemporary desire and fantasy manifests in relation to celebrities in today's climate of observation and publicity," says SI director Simon Castets of the artist. Prolific across media, he creates paintings that include imitations of Monet's "Waterlilies," process-based abstraction, and cartoony figuration. His videos—and Watson sculptures—reference the fictitious relationships between internet denizens and social media-friendly celebrities. And his Tatami-mat wall sculptures plumb the precarious real-world relationships that all this virtual closeness leaves behind.