



art21.org/rachel-rossin



Rachel Rossin

ABOUT

Born
1987 (West Palm Beach, FL)

Education

Florida State University, BS

Lives and Works

Brooklyn, NY

About the Artist

A self-taught programmer working in painting, installation, and virtual reality, Rossin examines the slippage between virtual and physical space, building hybrid sites for escape and reflection. Rossin began drawing, playing multiplayer video games, and learning to hack and program computer software at a young age. She describes these early activities as ways of building “homes” for herself, while searching for safety from the chaotic setting of her childhood and seeking neutrality in the highly gendered space of the Internet. Today, the artist draws from these seemingly disparate disciplines to create her artworks. Rossin uses imagery and avatars hacked from video games and other digital environments to create her virtual reality pieces.

“It always comes back to my own embodiment, and how to anchor this very abstract loose space in the same dimension that I’m in.” —Rachel Rossin

TEACHING CONNECTIONS

Media and Materials

digital media
installation
painting

Key Words and Ideas

agency	gaming
avatars	gender
body	home
chaos	neutrality
digital	video games
escapism	virtual reality

Related Artists

American Artist	Xin Liu
Meriem Bennani	Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle
Lucas Blalock	Shana Moulton
Cao Fei	Diane Severin Nguyen
Lynn Hershman	Naudline Pierre
Leeson	Jacolby Satterwhite

Rossin

How to Use This Guide

Art21 encourages active engagement when teaching with our films. The questions and activities below are recommendations for incorporating Art21 films featuring Rachel Rossin into your classroom. Each class will likely require different adaptations for best results.

NOTE: Please view all films before sharing them with your students.

Before Viewing

Establish key ideas, in anticipation of viewing the film(s):

- ① How has your art changed over time?
- ② What does home mean to you?
- ③ Where do you go to escape?

While Viewing

Support active viewing, and pause the film to clarify particular ideas:

- ① How is Rossin influenced by her childhood?
- ② How does Rossin make home in the digital sphere?
- ③ What does escapism mean to Rossin?

After Viewing

Follow-up on key ideas and synthesize information learned from the film(s):

- ① What would an artwork inspired by your childhood like?
- ② How do you create comfort in your digital sphere?
- ③ What does escape look like in the digital world vs the physical world?

Related Activities

Engaging in creative activities after watching Art21 films can reinforce learning and stimulate ideas. Art21 encourages educators to adapt these activities to their classrooms.

- ✓ How can you use an avatar to process big emotions? Spend some time sketching an avatar that could be useful to cheer you up when you are sad, give you confidence during moments of insecurity, or help you manage feelings of distress or anger. After you've completed the drawing, make the image into a 3D avatar using found materials. Then recreate the avatar digitally. How are they different? How are they similar? Could the avatar be useful both in the physical and digital space?
- ✓ In the film, we hear Rossin describe her upbringing as "chaotic." What do you do to stay grounded during chaos? Create a painting of that process.
- ✓ Watch the Art21 *New York Close Up* film, "In Between Languages" featuring Meriem Bennani. How do Bennani and Rossin engage in world building? How are their worlds similar or different?
- ✓ In the *IRL/url* film "Paint," Rossin uses AI to make artwork inspired by her own work. Collect as many images of your artwork from your childhood. Then make new work inspired by your style as a younger person using a different medium.