

Artsy Editorial

[5 Artists on Our Radar in April 2025](#)

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## Rachel Youn

B. 1994, Abington, Pennsylvania. Lives and works in New York.

There is something strangely human about [Rachel Youn](#)'s kinetic sculptures and their rhythmic, ritualized movements; watching them is a bit like watching awkward teenagers at a school dance. These "dancers" are formed from fake flora and salvaged motors that propel repetitive patterns of spinning and swinging. Youn's materials are made poignant by their associations with artifice and

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intimacy: The motors are sourced from discarded electronic massagers, cheap substitutes for human touch.

The moving flowers and leaves gyrate and often bump into one another, bringing a clumsy sort of eroticism to Youn's work. This overtone is humorously acknowledged by the title of their 2022 sculpture *Sexy but not joyous*. In the work—on view through April 12th in a [duo show](#) with [Sophie Birch](#) at London's [Alice Amati](#)—a pair of artificial orchids are attached to a wall-mounted rig. One of them seems to nuzzle the wall, while the other pokes in and out of a metal aperture, a suggestive gesture made mundane through stilted repetition. Writing about a different work on [Instagram](#), Youn succinctly described a theme that runs through their practice: “Desire is so embarrassing.”

A 2024 graduate of Yale's MFA program, Youn has exhibited widely in the U.S. and Europe. They have been the subject of solo shows at Soy Capitán in Berlin, Night Gallery in Los Angeles, and Sargent's Daughters in New York.