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Open Projector Night Spotlight- Rachel Debolski (OPN #23 People's Choice Award)

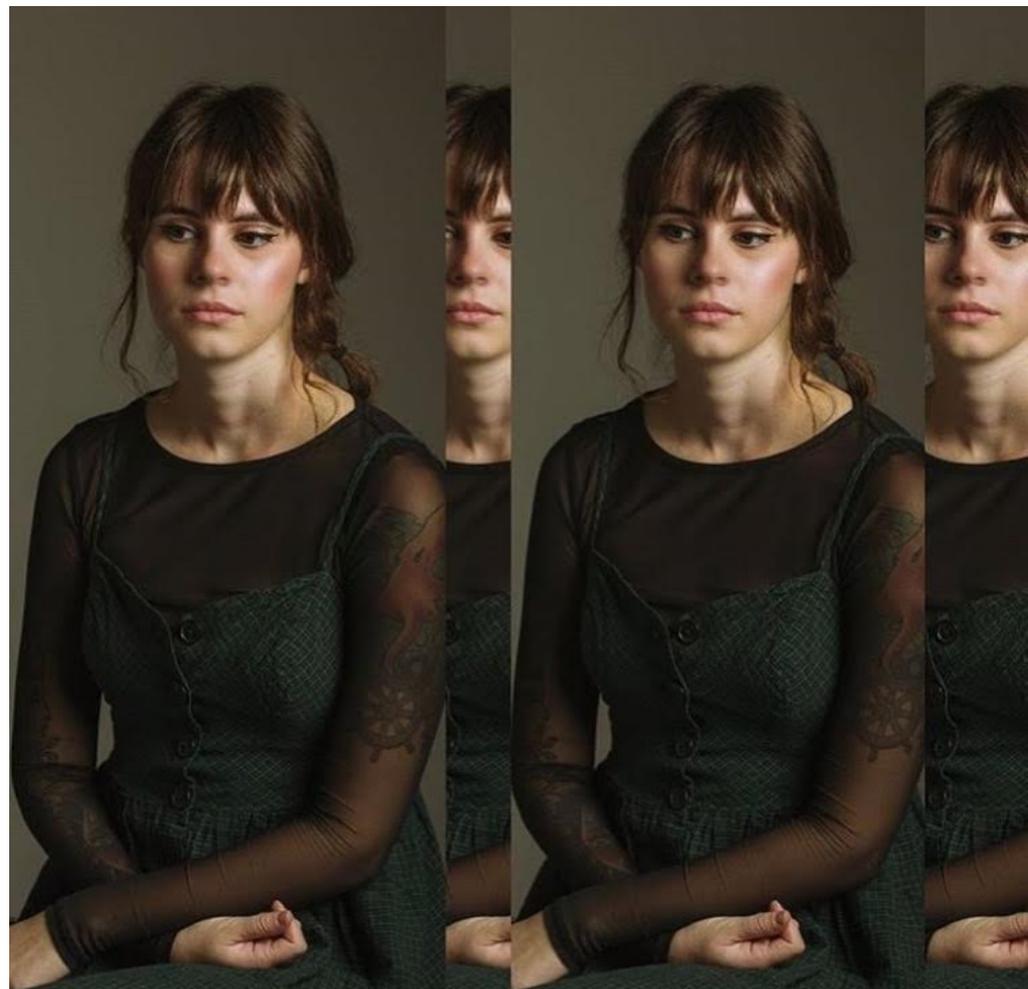
Rachel Debolski's short film *Nail Polish & Pills* is the most recent Open Projector Night Peoples' Choice Award Winner. We sat down with the filmmaker to learn more about her work, inspiration, and future projects.

Who is Rachel Debolski? Give us a short bio.

I'm a Detroit based writer, experimental filmmaker, installation and performance artist currently pursuing a BFA in Entertainment Arts with an emphasis in Digital filmmaking at the College for Creative Studies. My work uses narrative devices to analyze the human condition, and explore concepts such as female subjectivity, and the female experience. My characters often challenge the limited representation of female identities in film and media.

What is your favorite film(s) and why?

Sweetie (1990) By [Jane Campion](#) and *Love is A Treasure* (2002) By Eija-Liisa Ahtila. Both of these films have had a major influence on my work. They both opened me up to the world of experimental narrative and exposed me to strange and emotionally complex female protagonists.



Who and what inspires you to create?

Creating is cathartic for me. In my work, I often draw from my own personal experiences so when another person resonates or relates to something I made it's sort of like reassurance of my own reality. So that's what really inspires me to create, obtaining that sense of connection.

For those who haven't seen *Nail Polish and Pills*. Can you describe the overall narrative?

Nail Polish and Pills is an experimental narrative about seven teenage girls and their typical afternoon in a psychiatric hospital activity room. The girls paint their nails, do arts and crafts, eat snacks, and gossip to the viewer about one another.

5) Can you tell us a little bit about the process of *Nail Polish and Pills* and why you wanted to make it?

I felt that most films about the teenage experience and mental illness were often poorly depicted. I wanted to create a film that accurately and honestly reflected those realities. I used my own experiences to do so. At the time, I was experimenting with narrative-driven video installation's and playing around with perception, and how to engage a viewer more interactively. I was also getting into character studies through monologue writing. The overall story and structure of the film came from those practices. I then teamed up with three of my fellow classmates and sent out a casting call and ended up with an extremely talented all female cast and crew.



Tell us about your first related film experience, what hit you and made you want to pursue the world of film?

My first experience wasn't great. In fact, my first few weren't great. I didn't know anything about cameras and I was going through a bit of a pre-life crisis in terms of who I was as an artist and filmmaker. It got to the point that I wasn't even sure if going to school for filmmaking was something I should be doing. It wasn't until I saw Jane Campion's film 'Sweetie' in my narrative class that I really had that "uh ha" moment. From that point on I started writing more. Once I found my passion for what kind of films I wanted to make, the rest kind of snow balled from there.

Can you provide any advice to aspiring filmmakers?

For awhile I cared so much about how others were responding to my work that I wouldn't try anything, I'd play it safe. It wasn't until I started breaking out of that mindset that I began taking risks and experimenting and making films that I was actually proud of. So I guess my advice would be to do just that, take risks and try new things.

What's in store for the future projects of Rachel Debolski? Anything on the horizon that you're currently working on or would like to begin production on?

I'm currently working on an experimental narrative and video installation. The story is a dark comedy about four women who unexpectedly experience a psychotic breakdown during their mundane activities.

If you were granted a large budget and could make your dream film, what would it be?

A dark comedy musical that takes place in women's public restrooms. It's an idea I've had brewing for awhile. Someday though.

Any words about Open Projector Night?

It was a really great experience. I love what you guys are doing, creating a space for local independent filmmakers to showcase their work. I'm happy I was able to be a part of it.

Hours
Tues-Sat: 12-9pm
Sun: 12-6pm
Mon: Closed

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