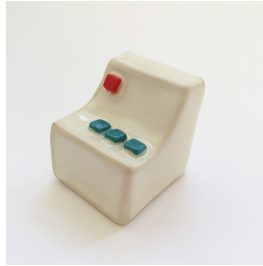


NYC CRIT CLUB
February 23, 2021
Donald Martiny
Week 2
Sarah Barruso | Short Essay



Sarah Baruso, *Home Machine 2*, 2019, glazed porcelain, 2" x 1.75" x 2"

I love my television remote. It empowers me. If a film or show I'm watching doesn't interest me, I simply push the off button and it magically disappears. Wouldn't it be nice to have a remote that works like that on all the troublesome and annoying things we are confronted with as we go about our day?

With her series *Home Machines* (2019) San Francisco artist Sarah Barruso takes this idea and runs with it, bringing her experience as a writer, musician, and fashion designer into her diverse art practice. Her work is highly conceptual, witty, and fun without being the least bit cynical. *Home Machine 2* is a very small work, only about 2 inches square, made of glazed porcelain, and could pass for a toy washing machine for a doll's house or a tiny version of EMERAC the first IBM computer. There is a line of three green buttons and one prominent red button. I imagine them to be on and off buttons. Other works in this series have more buttons that one can only imagine what they do. She photographs the machines in various places around her home making the images feel intimate and autobiographical. Other works by Sarah also play on

the theme “on and off.” She placed a red and green button on a piece of unglazed ceramic toast. I know that if I don’t monitor my toaster closely it will find a way to burn my toast the moment I look away. Some of her work deals with larger issues like her work titled Denial Blinds, a video she made in 2020 that deals with the terrifying California fires specifically and the environment in general.

Of course we all know denial doesn’t really solve problems. But it is empowering to feel like we have control over small parts of our lives. We can calm ourselves, find peace, even if only for a short while by looking at art, listening to music, or using one of Sarah’s empowering talisman.