

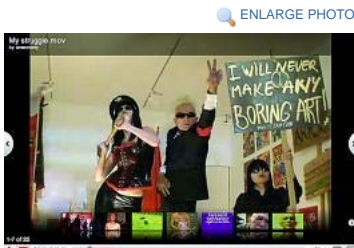
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If it's surprising that Kristen Atkins has organized an exhibition of artists' YouTube playlists at Owens Art Gallery, don't worry. It was a surprise for her too.



A still from a video from Toronto-based artist Istvan Kantor's YouTube playlist, which will be included in 'Playlists.'

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The native Monctonian, who is this year's gallery intern, Atkins' most recent work involves blacking out the text from used paperbacks. Playlists, however, brings together six artists' YouTube playlists, a collection of favourite videos available on their YouTube channels.

Atkins got the idea after she first discovered she had a YouTube playlist. She had been 'liking' videos on the site, but had no idea that her 'likes' were being catalogued on her personal channel.

"I wasn't an avid YouTube user at the time ... So when I found (my playlist) I was kind of freaked out in a way," Atkins says. "When I found it, I thought it spoke a lot about my interests and what I want to learn about. So it expanded from there."

Atkins was intrigued by how one's playlist could act as a form of 21st-century portraiture.

"Isolating one video doesn't say a lot, but when you have multiples of something, it's like Lego, but more descriptive."

Atkins received 25-30 artists' playlists after putting out a call for submissions. She narrowed the list down to those of six artists - Elisabeth Belliveau, Istvan Kantor, Jamie Q, Tanya Read, Jerry Ropson and Tara K. Wells. The playlists range from as few as eight to almost 60 videos.

Artists were selected based on the strength of their playlists to paint a picture of the artist behind the selection, "so, whoever had the most imagined personality from their videos," Atkins explains.

Like Atkins, Toronto-based artist Tanya Read, or mn0b0dy on YouTube, found participating in the project insightful.

"My playlist is just stuff that I like. It made me think: Is there a connection (with my practice)?" Read says. "I was able to think about it and make some connections between my work and interest in these weird and wacky commercials and music that I have picked."

The exhibit can be viewed three ways. At the Owens, a projector will play the playlists and two iPads will be available for personalized viewing. The work can also be watched at www.playlistsowensartgallery.blogspot.com from your own computer or handheld device (except for the iPhone).

"Initially the project was, curatorially, to create a platform for the audience, so the audience could get to know an artist through a very popular medium. The whole set-up is made to engage people to find relationships or similar interests with Canadian artists through their YouTube channels."

Mike Landry is arts and culture editor at the Telegraph-Journal. He can be reached at landry.michael@telegraphjournal.com.

'Playlists' will be on display from Friday until April 17 at Owens Art Gallery in Sackville. On March 16 at 7:30 p.m., Jennifer Chan, a student pursuing her masters of fine art in art video at Syracuse University, will present her lecture 'TROLLING SPAMMING FLOODING GRIEVING: net art and the performance of identity on the WWW' at the gallery.

'Playlists' runs from Friday until April 17 at Owens Art Gallery in Sackville. On March 16, at 7:30 p.m., Jennifer Chan, a student pursuing her masters of fine art in art video at Syracuse University, will present her lecture 'TROLLING SPAMMING FLOODING GRIEVING: net art and the performance of identity on the WWW' at the gallery.

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