

For Immediate Release

The Crisp-Ellert Art Museum will present *Top 30*, a video installation with accompanying drawings by French-Canadian artist Julie Lequin. The artist is known for making videos in which she weaves together semi-autobiographical narrative with over-the-top costumes to create humorous works that blur the line between “artist as individual” and “artist as self-consciously constructed persona.”



Video stills from Julie Lequin’s *Top 30* (Age 28), 2010

In 2009 Lequin traveled all over the country moving from one artist residency to another, and during that year she also turned 30 years old. She lived out of a suitcase and found herself without the usual comforts isolated from her family and friends. It was a time of intense self-reflection as she asked herself that perennial question, “what have I been doing my whole life?” This question became the catalyst for her latest and very ambitious video project, *Top 30*.

Top 30 is a three-channel video projection that begins with anecdotal stories told by the artist about each of her previous 30 years, starting at age 0. As a way to signify the forward motion of time, Lequin uses footage of various types of stereo systems in the second projection (read: record player, portable CD player, laptop with the now ubiquitous iTunes) to transition to the final screen, where a selected group of non-actresses perform from a list of 30 songs that the artist has compiled for every year of her life. The highly performative aspects of her previous works, where the lines between truth and fiction aren’t clear, are absent from *Top 30*. Instead, Lequin utilizes a subtler form of fiction by romanticizing her past to make us feel nostalgic, or laugh because the story she just told is a little sad. She is able to draw her audience in with stories that are sincere and humorous, without being cloying or overly sentimental.

While performance and narrative play a chief role in all of Lequin’s works, drawing is also significant to her practice. She uses drawings to further the storytelling aspect in her videos, and the works on paper are infused with the same wit and sincerity that permeate her anecdotes. Often incorporating text, the drawings act as a visual diary of the artist’s thoughts, depicting familiar objects, people and important moments. The exhibition will include two sets of drawings from Age 0 and Age 25.

Julie Lequin received a B.F.A. from Concordia University, Montreal in 2001 and an M.F.A. from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA in 2005. She has exhibited at the Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum in California, La Centrale Powerhouse in Montreal, White Columns in New York City and was most recently included in *Between Document and Fiction* at MausHabitos in Oporto, Portugal. Lequin was recently honored with the Joseph S. Stauffe Award from The Canada Council for the Arts and has completed residencies at Yaddo, Art Omi, Macdowell Colony and Les Recollets in Paris. 2nd Cannons Publications published her first book and DVD project in 2007. She currently lives and works in Montreal, Quebec.

The exhibition will open with a reception for the artist on Friday, October 7 from 5 pm until 9pm, and will be on view through November 24. For more information please contact Julie Dickover at 904-826-8530 or jdickover@flagler.edu.

This exhibition was made possible with the support of the St. Johns Cultural Council, serving St. Johns County, and the State of the Arts License Plate Program, as well as The Canada Council for the Arts.