

DAILY NEWS



WATCH: Art video airs on New York City taxicab screens

Photographer Ryan McGinley's 30-second clip is from his longer video for the single "Varúð" by Icelandic band Sigur Rós and follows a young woman as she skips barefoot through the city.

BY CHRISTINE ROBERTS

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A young woman, clad in a blue T-shirt and a golden wig, skips down the streets of New York in Ryan McGinley's 30-second video for Taxi TVs. (Ryan McGinley/APF)

New York City taxi riders have become unexpected witnesses to one of the first public art installations in yellow cabs.

A 30-second video, created by photographer Ryan McGinley, has joined the slew of weather forecasts and commercials airing on the small screens of 3,000 taxis.

"I'm always interested to see what advertising or news program it gets sandwiched between," McGinley said of his video, airing between Jan. 9 and Feb. 5.

"I feel like it's unexpected and people might be left confused as to what they were watching which is always good."

The mesmerizing clip is just a snippet of the full 8-minute video for the single "Varúð" by Icelandic band Sigur Rós. It follows a young woman named Jessica Tang – clad in just a blue T-shirt and sparkling gold wig – traipsing barefoot through the hazy, busy, streets of the Big Apple.

"I love to see it within the context of the cab ride through the streets of New York City," McGinley, 35, said. "Since it was shot on our city's streets and taxis appear in the video it really feels like it came full circle."

Doreen Remen, co-founder of the Art Production Fund, the nonprofit that organized the project, said the video's calming music and distinctly New York feel "really stops you in your tracks."

"It's a marriage of opposites," Remen explained. "There's a girl skipping through the streets of New York and you're probably sitting in traffic."

McGinley's ethereal video, expected to catch the eyes of over 2 million passengers, is not the first art installation to find a home on Taxi TV. In 2011, Iranian artist Amir Baradaran created a video piece that appeared in about 6,500 New York cabs over a seven-day period.

The 40-second clip "Transient," which reportedly reached about 1.5 million passengers, turned the camera on taxi drivers, showing them looking at their customers through their rear-view mirrors.

Remen says she hopes that art may one day take over Taxi TV and make commercials a thing of the past - a future one Brooklyn taxi rider says she can get behind.

"They kind of drive me a little bit crazy," Jamie Mandel said of the televisions. "The city is sick with sensory overload anyway."

Mandel, 29, caught McGinley's video en route to a meeting and said it was a "great reprieve" from the usually blaring noise of the small screens.

"It was nice, especially seeing it on a cold, winter day," Mandel said. "It reminded me of how great the city is when it's hot out."



It is that type of response that has inspired Remen to continue utilizing the Taxi TV format. Though McGinley's installation is coming to a close, Remen says the Art Production Fund will likely develop a similar project next year.

"It reaches a lot of people," Remen said. "You're not curating more physical stuff on this planet."

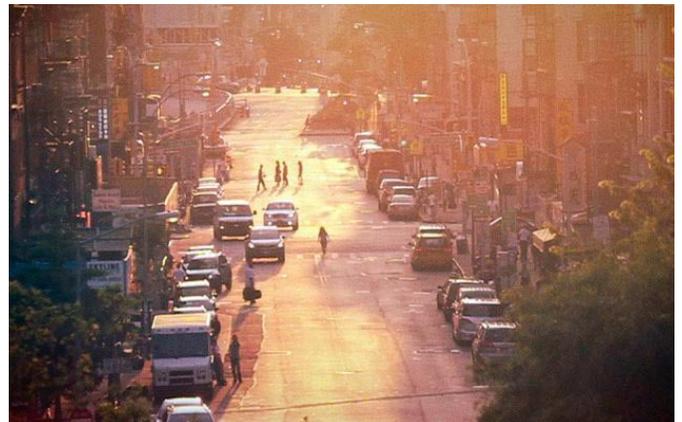
McGinley also said he would be open to working with similar formats in the coming years.

"It would be a dream to do more public art," he added. "I love being able to reach the masses in a different and unique way and connect with an audience that may not necessarily go to galleries or museums."

McGinley, who hasn't made art in New York for quite some time, said he decided to return to the city's streets for the video because he feels "very connected" to their network. (Ryan McGinley/APF)



The calming video features the song "Varúð" by Icelandic band Sigur Rós. (Ryan McGinley/APF)



McGinley's video is being shown in 3,000 taxi cabs and is expected to reach over 2 million passengers. (Ryan McGinley/APF)