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Inside Art

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Art's Ambient Sounds Coming Soon to Taxis

If you're one of those people who automatically punch the off button on Taxi TV screens, slow down. Art has just joined the mash-up of news clips and ads. Starting Wednesday and running through Feb. 5 about 3,000 New York City taxis will feature a 30-second video by the artist Ryan McGinley. Taken from the second version of Mr. McGinley's video for the Icelandic band Sigur Ros, the clip, called "TDB," shows his friend Jessica Tang wearing nothing but a gold wig and blue T-shirt, skipping barefoot through the streets of New York.

In Mr. McGinley's imagination, however, Ms. Tang is a girl with magical powers who leaves a trail of stardust behind her, oblivious to her bustle of the city. As she is seen floating through the urban sprawl, the ambient sounds of the band's piece "Varuo" play softly in the background.

"It's something I made this summer around the city, guerrilla style, with no permits or anything," Mr. McGinley said in a telephone interview. "In the four or five days we shot it barely anyone acknowledged her."

The idea of injecting a bit of art into Taxi TV is the brainchild of Yvonne Force Villareal and Doren Remen, co-founders of the nonprofit Art Production Fund. The two organized the video project, which they estimate will be seen by over two million people. Ms. Villareal said that she and Ms. Remen had been discussing ideas with Mr. McGinley about something they could do together, and on one of their studio visits he showed them the film clip.

"We both spend a lot of time in taxis and have been wishing Taxi TV had more compelling content," Ms. Villareal said. "This seemed like the perfect fit."

Mr. McGinley, 35, is best known as a photographer. He began his career when he was in his teens and started chronicling a group of his friends on the Lower East Side. "New York City taxis connect with New Yorkers," he said. "And what I love about Taxi TV is that you're a captive audience."



A video clip, by the artist Ryan McGinley, showing a woman wearing only a gold wig and blue T-shirt, skipping through New York City, will be featured on Taxi TV

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND ART PRODUCTION FUND