Julie Lequin - Excerpts from Top 30

Top 30 is thirty stories, and thirty songs, and hundreds of watercolour paintings; or else perhaps it's one long song, in suites, and one story, in chapters. Julie Lequin was 29 years old and turning 30, alone at an artists' residency in rural Nebraska, remembering.

Featured here are five selections from Lequin's ongoing retrospection, *Top 30*, which began in Nebraska and will end in Montreal, with stops in Malibu, Ireland and Los Angeles. Each year of the artist's life is shown three ways, shown in split-screen video. On the left, Lequin tells stories; they are melancholy and fanciful, the true tales of her year. She presents paintings, hand-made, and lists, hand-inked. She talks of "wine lips", homesickness, thrift-store shoes; roommates, watched clocks, her mother's heirloomed proverbs. On the right, we see and hear a song, the most important song, the one that soundtracked Lequin's year. From Michael Jackson to Peter Bjorn & John, "La Bamba" to "Pied de Poule", the songs are performed by friends and strangers, all women, in solitary re-imaginings. And in each chapter's centre screen we see the devices that played these songs, radios and turntables and iPods: the things that brought each track into her life.

The resulting work is approachable, full of whimsy, but it's steeped in nominal truth. The past is messy stuff, a knot of sights, sounds, slips and relationships; it is difficult to tell it truly. As Lequin navigates high drama and deep normalcy, these songs, stories and machines manifest her economic ups & downs, her heart's swoops, her confusion. In using English, Lequin's second language, she must consider each memory: recollection becomes deliberate.

It took thirty years, Lequin explains, to "get my shit together". *Top 30* is a beautiful, personal rendering of that universal fumbling. Aren't we all trying to do the same thing?

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