

Paul Atkins Artist Statement

Each year, the video game industry develops new games presenting deeper levels of control and detail than the previous year. I believe video games can offer us more than addictive entertainment. I predict an evolution toward player creativity and tangible results. As the degree of player control broadens, so does the potential for personal expression through virtual worlds. With the addition of realistic details, the line between game and cinema becomes blurred.

By video recording the highly interactive and intricate environment of Grand Theft Auto's Vice City, I took an easy jump from Video Game to Video Drama. The result is a twisted form of comical sketch that retains the appearance of the video game, but changes in its function. The player takes on the role of director, and the game becomes a show – complete with story line, character development and a viewing audience. This show becomes my personal expression.

Bio

In 1974 in Vancouver, Paul Atkins was born; the fourth child out seven. Three years later, Paul's family moved to an extensively wallpapered home in Souris, Manitoba, next door to his grandparents. His mother worked as a teacher and his father worked at the local Cheese Factory.

When he was seven years old Paul's grandfather gave him a sketchbook which he filled quickly with drawings of a farm, a city, his family, his family's van, and battle scenes of "Cowboys and Indians", and the Second World War. The wallpaper in his room was red, white, blue paisley with disco stars in the closet. At age sixteen his brother Peter bought a video camera. Paul and his siblings created a long series of homemade movies, rock videos, magic shows, martial art movies, sci-fi thrillers, mysteries, and sitcoms with titles like "Horrible Helga", "Guy Gross", and "Raise a Little Heaven". Paul also made a video game called "Souris" where the player could walk around town and buy things in shops. Following in the footsteps of his father and older brothers, in 1995 Paul got a job at the Cheese Factory for one year during which time he learned to play guitar.

The following year he moved to Calgary where he worked at a Wine Factory before attending the Alberta College of Art and Design. At ACAD Paul continued to create videos. He began using action figures and superheroes as characters with his voice as the ever-present narrator. His videos gained Paul a small audience of enthusiasts and friends at the weekly Harris Show at ACAD. His videos have also shown at The Sugar Gallery and Emmedia in Calgary and The National Student Film and Video Festival in Regina. Paul recently re-located to Saskatoon where he can be found singing Karaoke at the Cheese Toast pub or selling Magic Pens at the mall. He is currently working on a film about a bearded man.