

Carl Brown: Film Screening & Artist Talk

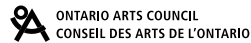
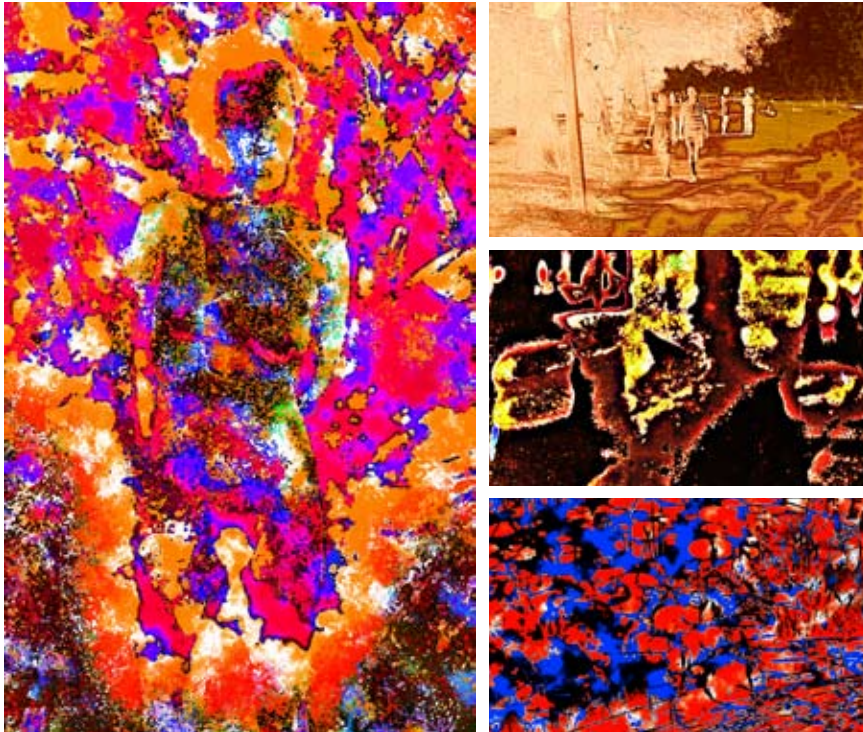
Screening two films:

Two Pictures and Blue Monet

Monday, March 2nd at 7 pm

Christ's Church Cathedral, 252 James Street North, Hamilton

Free



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Public Hours Tuesday-Friday 12-5, Saturday 12-4

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Carl Brown Visual Alchemy / Ocular Alkahest

February 13 to March 7, 2009

Opening: February 13th at 7 pm

Artist will be in attendance



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Material World

How did you first start making hand made films?

It began over twenty-five years ago with the film *Urban Fire*... I was searching for a unique form of expression for my work... so I started working with film in a materially oriented way. I discovered that, by working with the material aspect of the film surface, I could create my own visual language. I'd only just begun to tap the infinite potential of this technique.

What is the relationship between your photographs and your films?

Every time I work on a film or photograph, I develop new alchemical techniques, and develop better ways of expressing my inner "mind's soul diary." Each form enhances the other's development. The chemicals serve to create stability between the two forms.

Who/what are some of your influences?

Painting, and painters in particular, have always had a great influence on my work. Some of them are Rothko, Still, Matisse, Cézanne, Monet and many of the Impressionists.

I have tremendous respect for Monet as a colourist—his sense of colour has always been perfect. This contributed to the saturated blues, mauves and greens in *Blue Monet*. I created the colour combinations in harmony with Monet and added my own edges of colour opposition—something that Clifford is famous for.

Your colours are incredibly vibrant...

Colour is an important element of expression in my work. All my images begin as black and white footage that I tone and bleach, creating split tones ranging from monochrome to over thirty-two hues. The toners come from mixtures or "alkahest"—concoctions I've devised over the years—the way painters mix oxide pigments to create their unique "blue"...In a sense, I'm creating an emotional palette through colour.

You referred to the experiential depth of representation in Blue Monet...

To discuss this, I have to open up the internal alchemy that takes place during the temporal place...

In *Blue Monet*, the swimmer is a helpful conduit who descends and ascends the celluloid, bringing the positive light of the present and alchemically converting dread into renewed strength, hope and vision. Through the swimmer, I see my relationship to landscape in a new light... Past thoughts of decay dissolve in the water transforming into growth through the lilies. I capture this vision of transformation through *my soul's diary*—an explosion of positive emotion through colour and texture.

How did your working relationship with Rose Lowder evolve?

I first met Rose twenty years ago while I was on tour in France. There was an immediate respect and admiration for each other's working aspects, and how each process was ingrained in the final result.

Interestingly enough, *Two Pictures* was the beginning of the idea of stacking for me, and I began the shift from single screen to double projection films. *Two Pictures* could be a way to create a whole new level of depth; the audience would have the chance to interact on a more meaningful level—left eye... right eye.

Can you talk about the use of generational sound in Two Pictures?

The idea for the *generational sound* came from the fact that the surface work on the film had gone through as many as twenty transformations... The culmination of the interaction of these events created its own story that transpired on the entire surface, including the optical area...

To create the soundtrack, I used the optical light on the projector to read and convey the techniques and procedures through a chromatic scale.

How do the techniques in Two Pictures differ from your other work?

The appearance is more a cross between conté paper and a colour wash as at time the film is extremely tactile... through the work method, I achieved this aspect which was different in appearance and psychology from my previous work. The multiple passes created a compression of emulsion resulting in the above.

When did you and Michael Snow start working together?

Michael Snow and I have been friends and admirers of each other's work for more than twenty-five years. In fact, I have known him throughout my artistic career. We've worked together on many films, including *Condensation of Sensation*, *Cloister*, *To Lavoisier Who Dies in a Reign of Terror*, *brownsnow*, and *Triage*. This work has always been produced with the utmost respect for each other's abilities.

I will always be grateful to Mike—he was there right from the start, to encourage and help. Through his example, I learned that an artist is more than the work he or she creates.

Have you noticed a growing interest in hand made films since Urban Fire...

When I began making films, there was a historical tradition in Canada of working with the materials. Two artists who influenced me at that time were Vancouver based filmmakers Al Razutis and David Rimmer. Since then, materially oriented work is stronger than it's ever been. I see the future in a very positive light as more visually exciting artists make new discoveries in film art.

You've been a prolific and highly successful artist; you're already working on your next film, Memory Fade. What's next?

I still want to play the saxophone and sculpt.

Interview by Josephine Massarella

January 2009