

ly creates both a sense of intimacy with the audience through direct address, and a sense of distancing the audience from engagement within a flow of narrative. The complex blending of intimacy and dispassionate analysis is the tension within *Dunmovin*, creating slightly disturbing variations of pace and mood that give a fine edge to the experience of viewing the film.



Shirley and Zeal Van Voast: 1908

There are several recurring themes and motifs within *Dunmovin*, including that referred to by the title itself: motion and stasis. The orchestration of moving and still camera-work, and life-death symbologies, subtly conveys a tone of urgency underlying the surface level of ordinary rhythms and patterns explored, an urgency connected with the inexorable passing of time. It is as though the filmmaker's exploration of the familial, cyclic nature of time cannot avoid the knowledge that time is also linear, and all things must pass. This urgency is carefully echoed in the filmmaker's own self-questioning about his role, his intervening presence, his somehow arbitrary selection of what to shoot and how, his concerns about "getting a performance" or not being able to convey the feel of this milieu or these unique individuals. Like a variation on a theme, these concerns are again echoed by the revelation of Kelly's great-grand-

mother's photographic interests and role in preserving local history through this medium. At times *Dunmovin* becomes a celebration or "homage" to photographic reproduction itself, including a film-within-the-film and hundreds of old stills from the great-grand-mother's work. This attention to photographic reproduction is a perceptive and intriguing irony in a film addressed to and made "for you children yet unborn, and for yours." It is an irony which Kelly elaborates and plays with throughout the film, and it is, for me, one of the most interesting elements in the work.

The larger historical framework referred to in the film is the influence of the railroad on society, which we see reflected in microcosm in the lives of this family. A train is a lovely metaphor for the passage of linear time, and Kelly uses it in this way, associating changes in the larger community because of the rise and decline of the railway, with the familial rhythms of birth, growth, maturation, and old age. "I longed to make a film expressing personal concerns to specific, knowable people. I wanted to deal with ordinariness privately," says Kelly. *Dunmovin* has already been shown at the Art Gallery of Ontario as part of a series of "autobiographical" films. It's a work which reminds us of the beauty and pain in family history, and of the possibilities for using film as a tool of personal revelation.

Joyce Nelson

PAINTING WITH LIGHT

d. David Leach, ph. Philip Eavnshaw, Robin Miller, ed. David Leach, m. Robert Armes, Kit Johnson, Narr. Robert Jerkyll, stained glass: Robert Jerkyll, p. David Leach, p.c. Black Elk Films, Toronto, (year) 1978, running time 14 minutes, 35 seconds, dist. Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, Available in both French & English version.

David Leach's *Painting with Light* celebrates the art and craftsmanship of stained glass making, and the stained glass artist, through the works and personage of Robert Jerkyll. The opening image of a whimsical profile of a face in one of Jerkyll's stained glass designs slowly filling with light, encapsulates Jerkyll's philosophy of using the art of stained glass to manipulate light, a natural source of energy.

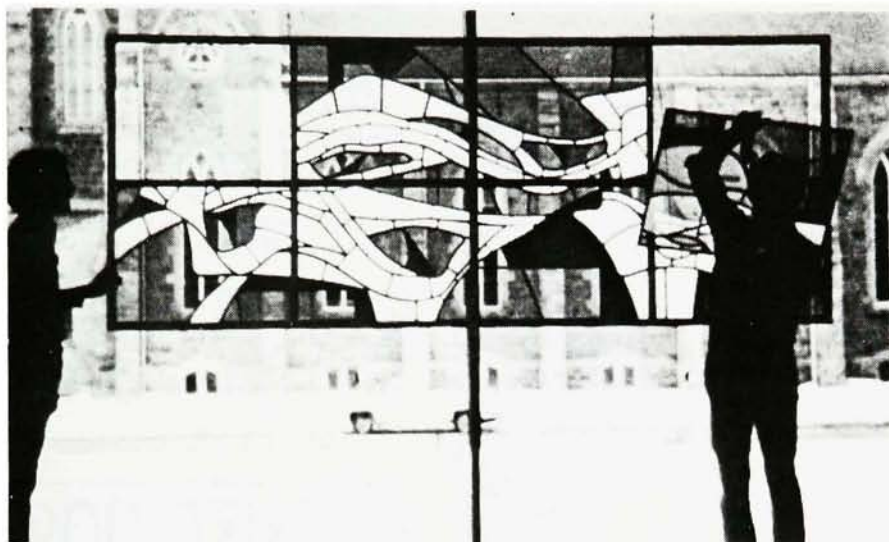
What is unique in Leach's *Painting with Light* is that the film circumvents the typical problems that arise when defining a three dimensional artform within a two dimensional medium. The film never falls prey to flattening out the artform, nor does it overwhelm the audience with continuous flashes of brightly colored finished products. Instead, Leach's film is a muted celebration of both the process and the product, a sensitive and highly sensory exploration into the textures of light, sound and colored glass.

By shooting extreme closeups and by layering images through a conscious arrangement of depth and space, Leach successfully explores the sense of touch as well as of sight and sound. Extreme closeups of sheets of slightly opaque colored glass with its air bubbles and imperfections or, for example, one outstanding soft image of fire, molten lead and glass mingling together, allows one to differentiate between and almost feel the various textures, colors, solids and liquids. One wants to reach out and touch the oozing, newly formed lead and the thick treacle used to cement the glass together.

Not only does the film explore the textures of glass, but of sound as well. The music fills and cements the cracks between the artist's voiceover and the silences. The percussive music blends with the rhythms, sounds and scraping of the craftsman cutting glass; the guitars and flute add the element of light to the glass and energy to the film.

Leach bridges the distance between the viewer and the finished product of a beautiful work of art, by demystifying and clarifying the process of the art of stained glass making, thus inviting one to participate in every layer of creation, from the workroom where

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Robert Jekyll assembling his panel "Homage to Soleri"

one chooses the sheets of textured glass and colors, to the conception of the design, and to the final technical craft of completing the work of art.

The film itself is structured in a style fitting the process of the art it describes. It begins bound within an almost classic documentary tradition of the narrative voiceover explaining that 'the workroom is where the art begins,' and yet it gradually develops on a freer, more personal level. One feels the freedom of the colors and of the inspired designs through the images of the stained glass bursting in a quick even rhythm. Linear camera movements follow the lines in the design. The skeletal architectural designs and plans are animated and clothed through a series of superimposed images of the various stages of the final work of art. As the finished stained glass design quickly takes form through the rhythmic fashioning of an expert familiar with his craft, so the images in the film are tightly edited towards the end; one is left with the same satisfaction of a well crafted work of art.

Of all textures and layers explored and developed in the film, the most important is that of light and shadow and its effect on colored glass. The artist begins by holding up the glass against a blank grey/white sky, and slowly throughout the film the glass constantly changes as the light varies through different times of the day and different seasons. The world moving

behind the glass becomes an integral part of the textures and colors of the work of art, humanized, as Jekyll explains, through the glass, much the same as it is through the lens of a camera. Life is shown meshing with art, breaking one's image of art as works to behold; the film instead invites participation as it emphasizes the accessibility of the artform by revealing the process.

Painting with Light reflects the excitement and imperfections of an editor cutting a tight fourteen or so minute film that is never boring yet may sometimes too quickly cut away from a beautiful image. This Canadian filmmaker has the sense to make the film available in both French and English; the film is being distributed by the Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre.

Florence Jacobowitz

OUR CULTURAL FABRIC

d. Kit Hood, sc. Soo Millar, ph. Bob New, Carl Harvey, ed. David Leach, Stephen Withrow, sd. Andy McBready, p. Linda Schuyler, p.c. Playing With Time Inc., (year) 1978, col. 16mm, running time 27 minutes, dist. Playing With Time Inc.

Over the past decade a wealth of material has emerged which has as its central focus cultural signs and symbols and their ideological role in society. However named, whether called semiology or cultural studies, works such as Roland Barthes' "Mythologies" or John Berger's book and film series "Ways of Seeing," have provided excellent examples of the kind of analysis possible for considering everyday social phenomena and their relationships with cultural perceptions. It is within the frame of such semiological endeavours that the film **Our Cultural Fabric** should be assessed, since it has set for itself the goal of "exploring the relationship of clothing with cultural and racial stereotyping" (to quote from its publicity folder). Yet, there is a striking naiveté about the film, as though its makers were unaware either of the historical precedents within their own line of attitudinal and cultural interrogation or of the inner workings of their own cinematic project.

"The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe," says John Berger. Since this is clearly the territory within which **Our Cultural Fabric** is operating, the film should withstand scrutiny on the same grounds. Produced for the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, and partially funded by governmental sources, **Our Cultural Fabric** was obviously intended to be a film which demystifies "foreign" styles of dress in order to enhance our understanding of cultural mores and differences. Clearly, this kind of film can contribute to easing tensions within a country embodying such a multi-racial and multi-cultural mix as does Canada. However, this project's brilliant potential is fulfilled only in tiny moments throughout the film. We see an East Indian explaining the cultural and religious significance behind the wearing of a turban and we watch the process by which he puts it on. Two interviews with Black Canadians reveal the social and, in the case of the Rastafarian, the religious significance of wearing their hair unstraightened and natural. East European immigrants discuss the clothing of their original homelands and the ridicule they have received

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