

FILM 4200

Flow Visualization

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Final Image

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Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment, for me at least, was to impart a visceral feeling in the viewer that could not be explained in words but rather in emotions. I wanted to create a static shot, which did not seem static but rather moves in and out, or side to side. Before completing the assignment I was watching a lot of films by Stan Brakhage who would paint on his films using different watercolors, and acrylics to create rather bizarre imagery. These films do not seem to have intellectual reasoning, instead they are more meditative experiences where the viewer relinquishes their control on the world and simply watches. That is the motivation that I ultimately used to create this unnerving film, that I believe is both peaceful and angry at the same time.

Fluid Phenomenon:

The process for creating this type of film is actually quite simple, even if it seems unexplainable. I first purchased twenty feet of clear 16mm film, which is simply blank film that has had the emulsion “fixed” off of it. After attaining this piece, I started painting on the film using three different colored oil paints, orange, green, and brown. The oil paints I used were optimized to stick to celluloid better than regular canvas type paints, but still the process took a month to completely dry. After the paint had dried and was hard, I took the film to a machine that converts film images into a digital medium. The machine works in such a way that the film is inserted on sprockets and each frame moves through a tiny gate, which is then recorded by a Canon DSLR. Aside from this there is also a pure white light behind the gate that shines through each and every frame resulting in white space on the digital image where the paints were not as thick or not touching. This aspect of light interacting with dry paint is when the fluid phenomenon comes into play. When this happens the light reveals all the different shapes and forms the paint took as well the density. As such when revealed on a large monitor there is this strange fluid sensation felt to each and every frame. When all compiled together in a time sense, the effect is like that of an extreme close up of water in terms of the viewer doesn’t know where and when this is, but rather just sees nothing but pure fluid shapes connecting from top to bottom.

Photographic Techniques:

This video does not have traits of traditional photographic technique what so ever, in fact the only time photography actually comes in to play is when the constraints of the class force it to. If I had wanted to I could have spliced all the film together and simply projected it with an old 16mm projector, which at that point would be revealing formations of paint rather than intricate assemblies of light. However doing this is dangerous due to the film being extremely fragile after having paint on it and there is a risk that it will tear during projection. So for that

reason I had to convert the images to a digital medium that would not be interfered with by the physical constraints of this world. There is a case to be made however that photography does come in to place for this project because the white light used to back light the film forces the camera to interact with the different arrays of light. However this is still a strange middle ground of presentation that I don't think has an institutionalized answer.

Summary:

I am not entirely sure if this project follows the rules of the assignment or if it is even presenting a flow phenomenon, but I also think that if the viewer searches for an answer to those riddles then maybe they can come up with something. I really love the films of Stan Brakhage and I simply wanted to make something that would resonate the ethos found in his style. I did however try a technique that I am unaware Brakhage ever used, in that I used oil paints instead of other types of paints. He never used them as far as I know because they take too long to dry and very hard to make flow like other paints. I used oil paints because I wanted a three dimensional quality in the video, sort of like prints of Van Gogh paintings that you know are 2-D but the paints have a strange texture. Along with the texture that I had intended for, there was a happy surprise in the final product in that the air bubbles in the paint actually showed up in the final image. This is great because the bubbles give this sort of consistent quality in terms of space, which the paint refuses to obey. In the end I like this project because it was fun for me to make and I actually enjoy watching it, maybe that's narcissistic, but hey that's what art is ultimately from.