

Programs: January 23 to March 2, 2008

## THE BOOK OF ALL THE DEAD

R. BRUCE ELDER'S *THE BOOK OF ALL THE DEAD*

"Elder's work is without equal in the history of cinema. At a time when nearly all cultural statements partake of the moral and cultural relativism of the post-modern experience, in his films as in his writings, Elder champions and recreates *with extreme courage* the profound questionings of the European philosophical tradition. In this way his work is intensely Canadian." - Peter Harcourt

In 2007, R. Bruce Elder received a Governor General's Award for Media Arts for his educational, critical, and creative contributions to experimental cinema. This recognition warrants a fresh look at Elder's first film cycle, not seen in its entirety in Toronto in more than a decade. Gathering films made between 1975 and 1994, the forty-two-hour-long *OF ALL THE DEAD* may be the most ambitious work in its medium, an epic of Biblical proportions and structure, in the same league as the towering achievements on which it is modelled -Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Pound's *Cantos*, Wagner's *Ring*.

This poetic meditation on modern history from the perspective of its endpoint in technological nihilism aims to wean viewers away from the instrumental rationality enshrined in narrative forms, so as to rekindle more embodied -and thus more spiritual -modes of awareness of "being-in-the-world." Elder's films are therefore designed to frustrate the conceptual mind's habitual reliance on univocal frameworks, wearing it down to induce instead a willing surrender before a barrage of elements that "operate[s] on various scales -from the personal, to the historical, to the philosophical, to the anagogic. . . . When such various particulars are combined and recombined in shifting juxtapositions, meaning is generated, because the form encourages people to discover likenesses among dissimilar and unexpected things" (R. Bruce Elder). -Christian Roy

Christian Roy is a cultural historian, a translator, and a board member of the Darling Foundry contemporary art centre in Old

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Montreal. He has written several texts on Elder's work.

These screenings are co-presented with Ryerson University, The Images Festival and the Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre, and will be accompanied by an interpretive text by Christian Roy which will be distributed before the screenings. Cinematheque Ontario wishes to thank the following for making this series and the publication possible: R. Bruce Elder; Shirley Lewchuck, Blake Fitzpatrick, and Pierre Tremblay, Ryerson University; Scott Miller Berry and Pablo de Ocampo, The Images Festival; Lauren Howes and Jeff Crawford, Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre; Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof; Bart Testa; Kathy Elder; and Christian Roy. Programme notes by Christian Roy unless otherwise noted.

All films 16mm, country of origin Canada, directed by Bruce Elder.



RYERSON UNIVERSITY

CFMDC40  
Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre YEARS

All Programs at Jackman Hall,  
Art Gallery of Ontario,  
317 Dundas Street West

Information on all the films in the programme can be found by referring to the links on  
the Cinematheque's Website:

<http://www.cinemathequeontario.ca/programme.aspx?programmeld=184>

## **The Book of All the Dead**

### **Part One**

Program 1: Wednesday January 23, 7:30 PM  
The System of Dante's Hell -- beginning  
running time: 121 minutes

Program 2: Thursday January 23, 7:30 PM  
The System of Dante's Hell-- continued  
running time: 180 minutes

Program 3: Thursday February 7, 7:30 PM  
The System of Dante's Hell -- continued  
running time: 208 minutes

Program 4: Sunday January 10, 5:00 PM  
The System of Dante's Hell - conclusion  
running time: 248 minutes

### **Part Two**

Program 5: Wednesday February 13, 7:30 PM  
Consolations (Love is an Art of Time) -- beginning  
running time: 256 minutes

Program 6: Sunday, February 17, 4:45 PM  
Consolations (Love is an Art of Time) -- continued

running time: 275 minutes

Program 7: Wednesday February 20, 7:30 PM  
Consolations (Love is an Art of Time) – conclusion  
running time: 272 minutes

### **Part Three**

Program 8: Saturday February 23, 9:00 PM  
Exultations (In Light of the Great Giving) – beginning  
Flesh Angels  
running time: 110 minutes

Program 9: Friday February 29, 9:30 PM  
Exultations (In Light of the Great Giving) – continued  
Newton and Me  
running time: 110 minutes

Program 10: Saturday March 1, 9:30 PM  
Exultations (In Light of the Great Giving) – continued  
Azure Serene: Mountains, Rivers, Sea and Sky  
running time: 115 minutes

Program 11: March 2, 4:30 PM  
Exultations (In Light of the Great Giving) – continued  
Exultations: In Light of the Great Giving

Program 11: Thursday March 6, 7:30 PM  
Exultations (In Light of the Great Giving) – continued  
Burying the Dead (Into the Light)  
running time: 90 minutes

Program 12: March 12, Wednesday March 12, 7:30 PM  
Exultations (In Light of the Great Giving) – continued  
Et Resurrectus Est  
running time: 135 minutes