



SPIRAL

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becoming known as a lesbian filmmaker, though I thought of myself as a film artist wasn't being seen in that way. That was always the most important thing to me. When I was and took up painting, it was to move away from being an English teacher and a housewife into a world of color and form and perception. I came film and letting the content be the means of making the film, then finding the form within it. There are a lot of things that come together at the same time. There's the end of ten years of feminism, the end of the big wave where we all worked very hard and found that it was going to take much longer than we thought; there was the fact that a lot of women who had been my lovers didn't want to be in my films and be part of a list of names. But primarily there was a need to make a film that would be seen as a film, not as a "lesbian film." The film wouldn't focus on women's bodies or a woman trying to break out of the frame, but would make you see where the concern was with the frame or the film stocks. So the next thing that interested me was seeing underwater. I was swimming for exercise in a pool that Julia Morgan designed and I was intrigued by the light underwater, the captured air in bubbles, the person kicking ahead of me, and the reflection on the marble walls. Just seeing an empty pool excited me. There is some sense of, I guess, to me, symbolism or mythology. I wanted to use the pool of water with nobody in it in the film [*Fools*, co-made with Barbara Klutinis] because to me it holds lots of meanings that aren't meanings that you can say in words. So after a certain amount of work, you have a background, you're not fighting to make a statement, you have some recognition already, and then you're able to do



Bruce Elder

Interviewed by Lianne McLarty

Lianne McLarty:

In her article in *Cine-Tracts* No. 17, Carol Zucker points out that *1857 (Fool's Gold)* makes use of aleatory devices within a controlled structure. Could you expand on these concepts — chance and structure — as they relate to your work generally?

Bruce Elder:

I have used various aleatory procedures — those Zucker described in her article on *1857*, and a randomization algorithm in *Illuminated Texts* to dictate the three categories of imagery that will begin each section of that film — as a means of avoiding having the work shaped solely by human consciousness, for human consciousness is, after all, a very limited thing. I want nature itself and those mathematical principles which express its order — perhaps even *give* it its order — to inform, even produce, the work. By and

