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# Elder's Eros film asks for meditative surrender

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MOVIE CRITIC

Like Michael Snow's recent *Corpus Callosum*, R. Bruce Elder's *Eros And Wonder* is a veteran avant-gardiste's attempt to reclaim technology in the service of movie art. But where Snow's movie was an exercise in highbrow slapstick, Elder's film combines computer image and sound processing (designed by Greg Boa) with a manual technique the filmmaker likens to "alchemy."

Which is to say that where Snow's comic manipulations of the human figure subject flesh to the transformative whims of technology, Elder's method tries to restore the soul to the machine.

*Eros And Wonder*, produced using a computer program designed by Elder that organized images according to categorical similarities, is as spontaneous an act of creation as Snow's is carefully manipulated. Elder has explained that when making the film, he had no idea what the final result would be. If the op-

erative analogy for *Corpus Callosum* might be wry, high-tech cartoonery, the condition aspired to by Elder's film is music. As the title suggests, its desired state is rapture.

Beneath a digital crawl of the filmmaker's own fallen-world verse — read by a synthesized voice — images of German towns appear accompanied by lush Romantic music. These are juxtaposed with images of a body lost in self-pleasuring sexual rapture, and the combination of poetry, classicism, car-

nal abandon and nostalgic longing creates a kind of rhythmic tension that is at once erotic and highly spiritual.

If ever a film required a kind of meditative surrender to the moment it creates, the strenuously non-linear and densely stratified *Eros And Wonder* is it, but the rewards are considerable for those prepared to lose themselves in its deep, soulful grooves.

*Eros And Wonder* screens at the AGO's Jackman Hall tonight at 6:30 p.m.