



Image and Identity: Reflections on Canadian Film and Culture (Film and Media Studies)

R. Bruce Elder

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What do images of the body, which recent poets and filmmakers have given us, tell us about ourselves, about the way we think and about the culture in which we live?

In his new book *A Body of Vision*, R. Bruce Elder situates contemporary poetic and cinematic body images in their cultural context.

Elder examines how recent artists have tried to recognize and to convey primordial forms of experiences. He proposes the daring thesis that in their efforts to do so, artists have resorted to gnostic models of consciousness. He argues that the attempt to convey these primordial modes of awareness demands a different conception of artistic meaning from any of those that currently dominate contemporary critical discussion. By reworking theories and speech in highly original ways, Elder formulates this new conception.

The works of Brakhage, Artaud, Schneeman, Cohen and others lie naked under Elder's razor-sharp dissecting knife and he exposes the essence of their work, cutting deeply into the themes and theses from which the works are derived. His remarks on the gaps in contemporary critical practices will likely become the focus of much debate.

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