

Sophie Michael Press

Writings about films

*Untitled (Objects 3)*, 2008

‘Sophie Michael’s *Untitled (Objects 3)* examine objects themselves with a certain detachment, regarding them afresh, asking us to do the same... a measured, accomplished experiment’

- Adam Pugh, Director of AURORA film festival

‘Sophie Michael’s *Untitled (Objects 3)* provides a direct resonance to the shapes and forms of Fischinger’s work. Michael builds images on three combined visual planes, superimposing objects over each other so their forms and colours interact. Michael’s film has a spontaneous in-the-moment feel to the layering of images, as we see her desk strewn with possible alternative shapes, objects and colours- each tense with the potential of visual combination. It is a strong exploratory piece, the constant question being what happens when this is added to this?’

- Chris Kennedy, programmer of Early Monthly Segments Screenings, Toronto *Carousel*, 2009

‘Continuing a line of experimentation established in *Untitled (Objects 3)*, which screened at AURORA 2008, Sophie Michael’s *Carousel* fuses an interest in form and colour with a neatly circular structure which posits three interlinked ‘rotations’, each in a different dimension. A leaflet-dispensing carousel rotates for the camera; the turret of the camera is rotated; and the film, rotating blindly inside the camera, completes a second circuit, exposing the footage of the carousel twice.’

- Adam Pugh, Director of AURORA film festival

‘Sophie Michael’s *99 Clerkenwell Road* is a revisiting of Fischinger’s abstract colour animations of the 1940s, with vividly coloured disc-like forms dancing across and into the screen. Although this sort of thing is a well-worn mode in avant-garde film—and two of its great artists, Robert Breer and Jordan Belson (both with roots in the 1950s), have just died—Michael pulls it off deftly.’

- Bart Testa, review for Cinema Scope Online, Review TIFF day 5: Wavelengths  
<http://cinema-scope.com/wordpress/cs-online/tiff-day-5-wavelengths/>

‘Emptiness is wistfully transformed in Sophie Michael’s *99 Clerkenwell Road* (United Kingdom) as the remnants of an empty shop provide the makings of an abstract light film-cum-toy solar system.’

- Andrea Picard, programmer of Wavelengths at TIFF, 2011

‘Sophie Michael’s *99 Clerkenwell Road*, a revival of the Fischinger-McClaren tradition that breathes new life into their exquisite formalism by discovering it in the material world.’

- Phil Coldiron, review for Slant Magazine: Toronto International Film Festival 2011: Wavelengths 1: Analogue Arcadia and Keyhole <http://www.slantmagazine.com/house/tag/99-clerkenwell-road/>

‘A purely formal film that does manage to evoke a significant sense of play (you’ll think you’re seeing planetary movement and other symbolic, not-just-spherical things, and you’ll be right), Michael’s experiment harks back to the 1920s and 30s work of the geometrical abstractionists and “visual musicians” – Oskar Fischinger, Len Lye, Hans Richter, Mary Ellen Bute – but with a harder, 21st century edge. This isn’t to suggest any computer-generated malfeasance; by all appearances Michael is generating her images with old-fashioned tools, and in fact the title refers to a defunct toy shop where she located the basic materials for the film, it seems [incorrect information] More than other purely geometrical films, *Clerkenwell* exhibits a palpable manipulation of space; the solid-colored round “discs” that swirl into the foreground pop out into sphericity quite often, enacting a groovy, almost Sesame Street-ish tension between polka-dot action and planetary orbit. Dark field, saturated hues, all in your face like it’s neo-geo party time.’

- Michael Sicinski, review for Notebook: Wavelengths 2011. Notes from a Dark Room  
<http://mubi.com/notebook/posts/wavelengths-2011-notes-from-a-dark-room>

- *99 Clerkenwell Road* recommended by Nathaniel Dorsky in LUX interview, as an avant garde film to see in 2012:

<http://www.lux.org.uk/blog/filmic-light-serene-beauty-earthly-experience-interview-nathaniel-dorsky>

‘A masterpiece at the other end of the spectrum was British artist Sophie Michael’s semi-abstract *99 Clerkenwell Road*. This gorgeous film is all sweet spot: limpid discs of color with a Matisse-like intensity.’

- Lesley Chow, review for Issue 78 November 2012, Experimental Faces, in The Melbourne International Film Festival 2012  
[http://brightlightsfilm.com/78/78-fests-melbourne-international-film-festival-miff-experimental-films-matthew-mcconaughey\\_chow.php](http://brightlightsfilm.com/78/78-fests-melbourne-international-film-festival-miff-experimental-films-matthew-mcconaughey_chow.php)

‘Sophie Michael’s films are like a visual hide-and-seek. Her work brings together sculpture and film in such a way that ordinary objects are transformed for us by the minutely directed specificity of her looking. The reels unfold kaleidoscopically before the eye, looping through analogue sequences of manipulated light and glimpsed environments that are both confused and familiar yet all shot through with an acute awareness of the nostalgia we attach to both formats and objects.’

Sophie Michael nominated by Eva Rothschild, *20/20*, Frieze, Issue 141 September 2011; 20th Anniversary Issue