

*midst* (1997, 70 minutes, 16mm silent colour film)

Barbara Sternberg's new film is a beautiful collection of light and colour and shape which flows effortlessly from the screen to the soul. It is full of iconic images which refuse to be icons. With scenes captured on beaches through the lounging filmmaker's feet, the film seems to be trying to create a new set of metaphors while utilizing familiar imagery.

Sternberg uses the camera to study the most intimate part of our body: our hands. These are the extension of us which we use to express ourselves in so many ways, many as silent as this film. While they age and wither, they are increasingly important in the creation of beauty.

*midst* is a part of the environment rather than, as with many of Sternberg's other films, an agitated outsider. I feel I must speculate that this film marks an ideological change for Sternberg in which she seems to have come to peace with the world around her. Much of the film is shot outdoors, utilizing a large range of landscapes. This is familiar territory for Sternberg and she is in top form. The soft images and haunting colours call to mind the Group of Seven as the camera grabs sketches from the living air.

Furthermore, like looking at painted canvases in a gallery, the images stand on their own without audio accompaniment. Regarding this, Sternberg explains that she attempted to have music composed for the film but that the images were never enhanced by the combination. Her film is a poem of light, speaking loudly with its silence.