

***“Where the cosmic meets the microscopic”***

By **GARY MICHAEL DAULT**

**Moving Pictures at Artcore**

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Artcore Gallery is still closed for the holidays, but when it reopens after New Year's, there'll be another chance to see the suite of quite remarkable videos by both Canadian and international artists that the Distillery District gallery had begun playing in November. These works vary enormously in style and approach and, like most anthologies of videos, are profoundly uneven in their ambitions, in their technical generation, and in their aesthetic payoff.

Some of this stuff is really brilliant. Veteran South African artist **William Kentridge's** desperate and poetically satirical video works consist of raw animations of his own savage drawings (often of the havoc wreaked upon South African culture by Kentridge's fat, bullish, fascistic and mercifully fictional protagonist, Soho Eckstein); the hi-tech, dizzyingly symmetrical, splintered and fractured visions of urban crowding and cacophony by Italian artist **Stefano Cagol** (Tokyospace); and the computerized 3-D renderings of urban sprawl and runaway automobile culture by Norwegian artist **Sven Pahlsson** (Crash Course, Sprawlville, Consuming Pleasures).

There are a few embarrassments. One of them is Toronto artist Jubal Brown's mawkish *In Bloom*, a fearfully lightweight look at some nodding flowers in a garden, their Edenlike perfection compromised by the all-too-predictable presence nearby of a few crawling bugs (the cliché of the cankered rose, the thorn in the paw, etc.). Another is Istvan Kantor's sad but almost hilariously irritating video, *Ideal Gift*, documenting the forcible removal from the National Gallery (for spraying vials of his blood in a big red X on the gallery wall) of Kantor, who this past year was given the Governor-General's award for Visual and Media Arts.

The best thing in *Moving Pictures* is *Multiplicacion de los Borregos* by Belgian-born artist **Francis Alys**. Alys's video, set in Mexico, where he has lived for the past 20 years, shows a grainy, black-and-white view of a piazza into which strolls a man walking, followed loyally by a sheep. The sheep is soon joined by another and, as man and sheep walk round and round a central monument in the square, more sheep come to join them one at a time, each walking docilely behind the one ahead of it, keeping the pace, maintaining the completely purposeless pattern. I guess it isn't necessary to elaborate on the puckish metaphor that fuels this totally delightful, maddeningly engaging work.