

# Twelve Hours of Daylight

Directed, painted and edited by Bridget Sutherland  
Co-producer Paul Judge

Genre: Experimental short film, 6 mins 30 secs

Music : David Kilgour: "Diamond Mine"  
Performed by David Kilgour & The Heavy Eights



'Twelve Hours of Daylight' is an abstract short film quoting the poems 'Night Tree' by pioneering New Zealand experimental poet and film-maker Len Lye, 'Ah Sunflower' by William Blake, and 'Are there not Twelve Hours of Daylight' as quoted in the painting of the same title by NZ painter Colin McCahon.

Using 16mm and 35mm hand painted film alongside archival and filmed footage, 'Twelve Hours of Daylight' references the passage of day and night, the alchemy of light and nature. Its abstract painterly sequences are combined with text to foreground questions concerning ecology and human consciousness.





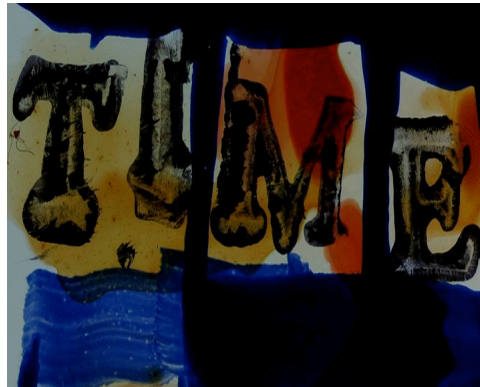
The soundtrack, composed by the renowned NZ musician David Kilgour, suggests a subterranean journey where the dangers of mining and global warming take on metaphysical proportions. Entitled 'Diamond Mine', Kilgour's lyrics work in tandem with the poems to create yet another layer of word with word, poetry with music.



The poem 'Night Tree' comes from a collection of experimental poems by Len Lye that foreground the power of nature, energy and non-rational experience. "Lye developed what he called 'myth' poetry based on his intense, almost animistic response to nature." A tree becomes a lighthouse, a living miraculous organism that by night changes light into salt crystals and seeds. Lye was ahead of his time in his concern for the planet and his innate awareness of the interconnectedness of all organisms with the atmosphere and solar system.



Len Lye's themes of metamorphosis, energy and animism were also central to the poetry of William Blake and it is no surprise that Lye was a great admirer of his work. The painter Colin McCahon combined words with images in a way that also paid homage to Blake, he painted poems as if a script for reading, highlighting single letters and phrases or fading them off into darkness as the poem unfolded in time.



McCahon like Lye was experimental in his approach to language, in this instance combining poetry with landscape, creating a dialogue across mediums and different textual sources. In 'Are there Not Twelve Hours of Daylight' McCahon quotes from John , the painting becomes a poem that visually plays out the journey of light and the encroachment of nightfall. In the context of the film, McCahon's use of this poem highlights the urgency of our environmental situation and the consequences of fossil fuel consumption.



As a whole the three poems in 'Twelve Hours of Daylight' speak to each other, bringing together fragments of nature and language in a dialogue across time and space. The concept of 'While you were sleeping' has darker undertones in this regard, suggesting the need to wake up to the effect that industrialism is having on our environment. There is still some hours of daylight in which to ensure the continued existence of trees, sunflowers and the consciousness we share with other animals.