

Come Closer

Director Peter Mackie Burns
Scotland 2011, 1h16m, N/C 15+

An invitation, perhaps? We are being offered the possibility of intimate access to the lives of a diverse group of individuals living in Glasgow. A documentation of casual conversations and everyday happenings – an attempt to capture those fleeting, sometimes intense moments which reveal how we engage with others and deal with the trials, tribulations, routines and rituals of ordinary existence in an urban environment. The mood is meditative and allusive, allowing deeper themes to emerge without excessive underlining of themes of connection and disconnection, love and affection, ageing and loss, the twists and turns of ordinary talk. There are affinities here with some aspects of Peter Mackie Burns' earlier short fictions such as *Milk* (2005) and *Run* (2005). Glimpses of the private made public – one of the eternal promises of the documentary genre but here given fresh eyes, avoiding reductive formats, excessive signposting and judgemental presentation. This is not an aloof, neutral, observing eye.

Documentary has long been defined as the creative treatment of actuality. Writers such as Jacques Rancière remind us of the links between fiction and documentary. Both construct assemblages of 'represented actions, assembled forms and internally coherent signs.' Documentary treats the real as a factuality that has to be understood but it is a composed fabulation – 'a way of cutting a story into sequences, of assembling shots into a story, of joining and disjoining voices and bodies, sounds and images, of lengthening and tightening time.'¹ Contemporary documentary is fully aware of its constructed nature.

A series of particular artistic decisions contribute to the overall tone and texture of *Come Closer*. These include the refusal of a conventional narrative framework and linear structure; not using a full film crew and having some of the filming done by people coming from a background in stills photography; assembling lots of material over a two year filming period and then a lengthy process of editing and arranging. The result is certainly not haphazard but a sensuous evocation of people and place – a considered combination of chance and order.

What we see and hear are a series of captured moments, overheard encounters, snapshots of everyday life as it happens. We gradually learn about people as they go about their routines and see how they deal with those universal issues which affect us all – birth, illness, death, childhood, adolescence, ageing, family, life, sex, work and play. The universal is always captured through the particular – a focus on the little idiosyncrasies of particular lives, the anecdotal, gestures and faces, the careful framings of rooms and streets. Seemingly casual and informal shots are contrasted with more highly composed, even beautiful, renderings of the urban landscapes and architectures which frame these lives – perhaps hinting at wider, utopian movement beyond current possibilities. In any case, there is a refreshing sincerity exemplified in the aesthetic choices made – reconfiguring the taken for granted and familiar with an appealing ingenuousness.

¹ *Film Fables* – Rancière, Jacques. (trans Battista, E; Berg, 2006)

This oblique approach acknowledges that any documentary can only hint at and never totally grasp the flux and flow, the messiness and craziness of reality. However by treating other lives with respect and acknowledging their intricacies, it enables the viewer to construct their own pathways and form their own narrative links. In an image-saturated society, time for reflection is needed. Behind all the entanglements of daily existence we can try and look more closely.

David Imrie

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In memory of Bert Eeles Film Editor 1943 – 2011

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| Director | Peter Mackie Burns |
| Producer | Marie Olesen |
| Film Editor | Bert Eeles |
| Directors of Photography | Julia-Kristina Bauer Gerry Fox George C. Geddes |
| Sound Design | John L Cobban |
| Colourist | Ian Ballantyne |
| Website | Ross Carmichael, Bulletproof ID |
| Animation & Titles | Deborah Norton |
| Additional Photography | Doug Aubrey Robin Johnstone David Liddell Claire Stewart Ray Tallan |
| Dubbing Assistant | Romano Valerio |
| Editor Assistants | Florian Nonnenmacher Gavin Rizza |
| Post Facility | 422.tv |
| Post Production Consultant | Brian Stevenson |
| Trailer Editor | Berny McGurk |
| Production Accountant | Ian Reid |
| Publicist | Lynn McAdam |

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