



Nov 27-Dec 4, 2003, Issue 426, p. 82



Jeremy Blake, stills from *Reading Ossie Clark*, 2003

Jeremy Blake, "Autumn Almanac" Feigen Contemporary, through Dec 20 (see Chelsea).

Whether you call them films, DVDs or video installations, Jeremy Blake's luscious computer-generated animations have always won over even the most ardent anti digital gallerygoer. They embrace his vivid use of abstraction—hallucinatory forms and supersaturated color—as an extension of painting. But really, Blake's first love is rock-and-roll, not art-and not even the music, but the purple haze of glamour surrounding the rock lifestyle, which can be as sordid and steamy, as potent and ephemeral as the heroin high before the overdose.

"Autumn Almanac," named after a 1967 Kinks song, includes a series of paintings and one large-scale digital print. But the heart of the exhibition is the new video *Reading Ossie Clark*, perhaps Blake's best work to date. With *Ossie Clark*, Blake has found the perfect vehicle for his obsessions, creating an ostensible homage to the pop icon/ fashion designer who briefly captured the world stage when it was peopled with such shooting stars

as Twiggy and Hendrix, Jagger and Hockney.

Starting with the image of a cigarette tip smoldering in the darkness, and ending with an airplane view of a descent through clouds, the 9-minute film is completely mesmerizing, even if you know nothing about fashion, Carnaby Street or Clark's murder at the hands of his lover in 1996.

Although the film is narrated (by art-world doyenne Clarissa Dalrymple), this is not an E! Entertainment Network biopic, a Ken Burns-style documentary, or even an MTV music montage. Instead, by merging film footage, photographs, drawings, paintings and handwritten excerpts from the designer's diaries, Blake conveys the delicious accuracy of drug infused memories, leaving this viewer to wonder whether all of Blake's abstractions are but the byproduct of one high or another.

-Barbara Pollack