

CLOSE YOUR EYES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2009



Rushing through the hour

Mark Lewis hides between the grains of time. His [work](#) is a bridge between photography and film; the movement in his films is sluggish, slow. The pictures crawl out of the format, they come to life, and move, ever so slightly; taunting notions of place and time.

Lewis' work suggests time is not there at all, that we've got it wrong. And when the phone rings from five hours in the future, I start to think he's right. Floating ahead of me in London, where he now lives, Lewis announces his name and that he's not sure who he's calling. This is understandable, given that he's just finished nearly a week of back-to-back interviews.

Since being selected to represent Canada at the Venice Biennial (read: the Olympics of the art world) Lewis has had to become an instant media darling. The Wall Street Journal named him one of the "[artists to watch](#)" at the Biennial, and Italian Men's Vogue has been knocking on his door, delivering extra-pricey suits fitted for Lewis to wear in fashion-photo shoots.

It's a lot of attention for a Canadian. And around here, which he used to call home, Lewis isn't much of an art-star. He's a museum staple in Europe and runs in the artsy-intellectual circles of [Central Saint Martins](#), where he teaches, but it took the biennial to expose Lewis to the Canadian masses.

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Now Canadians have read the name in the Star, the Globe and on the CBC, and they're about to see it all over the place. Lewis will be returning to Canada this fall for a showcase of his work at the AGO, where Venice-alumni [David-Altmejd's](#) work is currently on display. Lewis will also have a documentary of sorts (though he pauses with hesitation when I call it a "documentary") in autumn's TIFF.

And while he's here, he'll hopefully shoot more of the Canadian landscape to which his lens continues to return. While Toronto's architecture tends to vote conservative and slate gray high arteries run towards our simple suburban outskirts, maybe that's Lewis' point.

Turning his lens on the obvious, Lewis reveals what we have been missing as we act oblivious and pass by the art that fills our lives. "Most of my films are banal or plain," he says. "One of the things I try to do is see how the banal, plain and everyday can reveal something unexpected." This is what Lewis does with his films: he makes the banal breathe, slows the viewer down, and forces them to confront the everyday landscapes. In doing so, he reveals truth about the way we live.

His films take viewers to the top of the TD tower, the depths of Algonquin park and the icy rink that sits on City Hall's front lawn. The latter is the setting for the title film of the four-part collection he created especially for Venice, Cold Morning. On the bridge between late night and early morning skate a romanced duo, moving ever so slightly across the ice in eerie light, again taunting time. This isn't not morning, nor is it night. It's Lewis time. Finally.

**Full feature to come in [Futureale](#) magazine*

POSTED BY RUSSLESS AT [WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2009](#)

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ABOUT ME



RUSS MARTIN

I enjoy one-on-one
conversations, but if
you don't keep up I

will either give you too much
information, or stare into space.

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