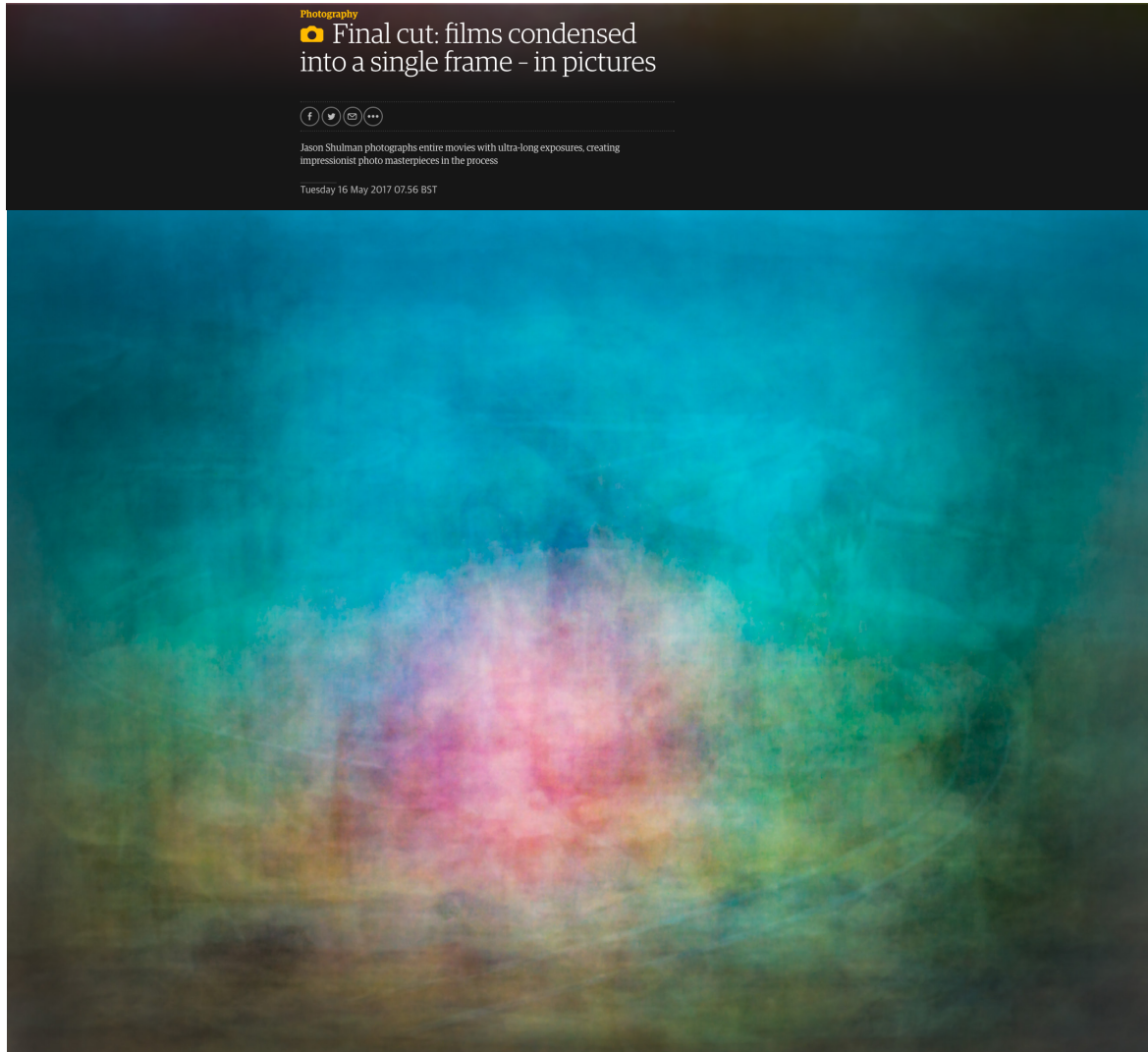


the guardian



Dumbo (1941)

Artwork by Jason Shulman

Jason Shulman captures the entire duration of a movie in a single image with his series Photographs of Films. New large-scale versions of the works are being shown as part of the Photo London festival, 17-21 May. The series is at Cob Gallery, London, until 4 June. All photographs: courtesy Jason Shulman and Cob Gallery.

Pointing his camera at a screen and making an ultra-long exposure of the film as it plays through, each scene from a movie is overlaid on top on another until they dissolve into an impressionistic blur – but with faint distinguishing features remaining. Take Stanley Kubrick’s *Dr Strangelove* – amid its moody monochrome shapes, Ken Adam’s classic set designs are still visible.

‘There are roughly 130,000 frames in a 90-minute film and every frame of each film is recorded in these photographs,’ Shulman says.

'You could take all these frames and shuffle them like a deck of cards, and no matter the shuffle, you would end up with the same image I have arrived at'.

'Each of these photographs is the genetic code of a film – its visual DNA'.

In an interview with *Another Magazine*, Shulman elaborated further: 'I set up my camera in front of my computer and pointed it at a movie, expecting that, if you expose the negative for an hour and a half with a film in front of it, you'd get a bit like what you get when you mix balls of Play-Doh together – just a brown monotone hue. So I was very surprised when in fact these kinds of rather interesting translations of films started occurring'.

'You can learn something about the director's style from this kind of kooky translation: you can learn that Hitchcock deals with people, for example, Kubrick deals with composition, Bergman deals with ... I mean lots of Bergman films are kind of moody and psychological, much more so than other films'.

'So it's odd that in one exposure all of these things, although very subjective, kind of come through'.

Some films didn't work so well, however. 'I shot *Avatar*, for example – I shot all James Cameron's films – and what I got most is literally just a kind of Pantone swatch at the end, a kind of plain, flat blue, because he cuts very quickly, the camera's always moving. So it all depends on the director's style'.

Shulman's other work extends way beyond photography though, encompassing installation, sculpture and video.