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Now Emoting | An Aura of Uncertainty

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The New Zealand-born photographer **Carlo Van de Roer** recently paid a visit to the ophthalmologist, saying he had been seeing clouds in his eyes. The occurrence wasn't completely abnormal for Van de Roer as of late; for the past month, he's been taking portraits of people's auras, a pseudoscientific phenomenon discussed by migraine sufferers and W.E. Butler alike. Known for his panoramic color prints of social landscapes (he won both the 2008 and the 2007 PDN Pix Digital Imaging Award), Van de Roer is conducting his current project with a

rare **Aura Camera 6000**, a camera invented in the 1970s that claims to record (via palm-reading sensors) biofeedback rhythms in colored clouds around the subject's physical image. Despite the fuzzy logic — the aura's location and color are said to signal the spectrum of one's emotional state — there is no doubt that Van de Roer's photos are hauntingly beautiful. Some subjects' auras are composed in vividly rendered halos; others possess more erratic swirls that leave the sitters' bodies buried under a kaleidoscope of misty hues.

Sure, a cynic could overexplain the scientific process or scoff at what might be fortuitous, but Van de Roer, who has already snapped portraits of the photographer Richard Kern and National Public Radio's Soterios Johnson and who plans to exhibit his continuing series as a color spectrum sometime next year, claims that the attempt to record one's aura fits comfortably in line with the subjective nature of photography itself. Science aside, one thing is certain: nothing, it seems, is clear.