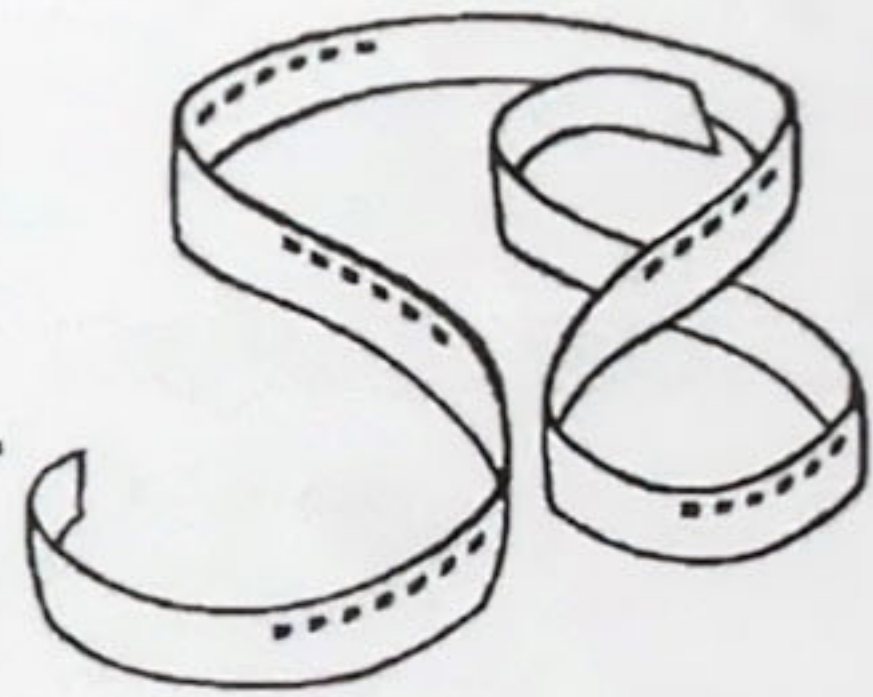


# Super Eight



Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc.  
ISSUE 104 JULY 1995

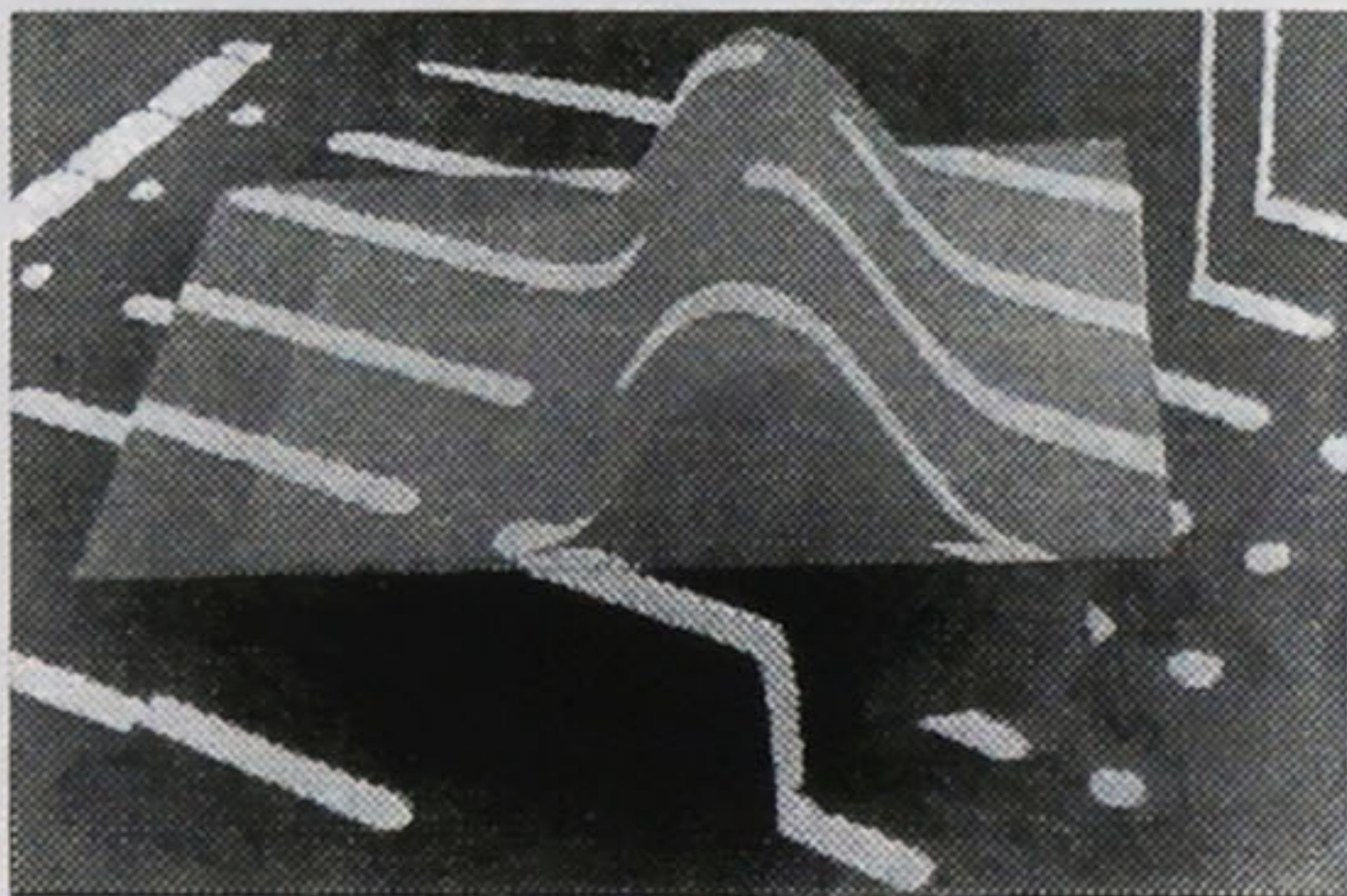
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Gary - This was sent in by Daniel  
Kobanid for the newsletter. Put  
in as is I'd suggest, with maybe  
a border -  
Bill

## **Melbourne Super 8 Film Group** *Fundraising Raffle*

**Prize: An Original painting**  
**LIGHT OVER, AROUND, UNDER**  
by Tony Woods, 1985  
Valued at \$1000



Size 20" X 30" oil on board, framed.

### **Members urged to sell tickets.**

Collect books from the office, at the next  
Open Screening, or order on  
(03) 9417 3402.

*All proceeds going towards a new projector  
for the group.*

**Tickets only \$2 each!**

## **SUPER KIOSK 8:**

The 8th Melbourne Super-8 Film Festival  
STATE FILM THEATRE, Sep. 8 - 10, 1995.

The festival is now only two months away, so  
get ready!

### **ENTRY DEADLINE:**

Films must be entered by Tuesday, August 1.  
We will be accepting some entries up until  
Aug.13, for films hot off the editing table, but to  
be guaranteed of entry, get your films in early!  
An entry form was in last month's newsletter. If  
you need another one, contact the S-8 office.

### **POSTER DESIGN COMPETITION:**

We are still looking for a design for the poster/flyer for  
the festival. The poster will be A2 size and have a  
maximum of two colors. If you have a good idea for  
the graphics/design of the poster, then do a rough  
sketch of it and send it in to us. We will then select  
one of these entries and pay the winning artist actual  
money to do the final design for printing. Please  
send entries (address on the back of the newsletter)  
to us quick smart. Deadline is mid-July.

### **SELECTION COMMITTEE:**

A number of people have nominated  
themselves to be on the selection committee,  
so all places have now been filled. Thank you  
for your support.

### **OFFICE HOURS:**

Office inquiries relating directly to the festival  
can best be answered by the co-ordinator Bill  
Mousoulis on Thursday afternoons, when he is  
definitely in the office. He may also be in  
Monday afternoons, or leave a message.

## notes from the answering machine

Just a short bit from me this month. As editor of last  
month's Newsletter (Issue 103) I in some ways regret  
publishing Bill Mousoulis' article, but in other ways  
believe that part of what makes this Group work, is the  
absence of censorship. I think it is unique to the group  
that we maintain a policy of showing all the films that are  
brought along to the Open Screenings, and likewise  
publish all articles submitted (time and space permitting).

At the recent meeting with the Australian Film Commission,  
one of the positive points that was raised by the AFC was that  
the Group is so accessible, and a free forum for film culture.  
This is unique to our Group. It is every member's responsibility  
to treat this freedom with respect, and look after each other,  
which means watching each-other's backs, and looking after  
the interests of the Group. We are under scrutiny. Every  
Newsletter, every Open Screening, every festival. This is  
what the Group is judged by.

In hard economic times for the Arts, everyone is fighting for  
the funding buck. If we sink into petty public bickering, we  
will lower ourselves into the depths of other Groups, where  
the mainstay of the Group's activities is political backstabbing,  
and where we will forget why we are here; to make, discuss  
and enjoy the art of filmmaking...

### **Call for Submissions** **Pandaemonium Festival (London)**

Artists working in Film, Video and/or New  
Media are invited to submit preview tapes (VHS).  
SUBMISSION DEADLINE 1st SEPTEMBER 1995

more info: contact Tim or Steven at the Group.

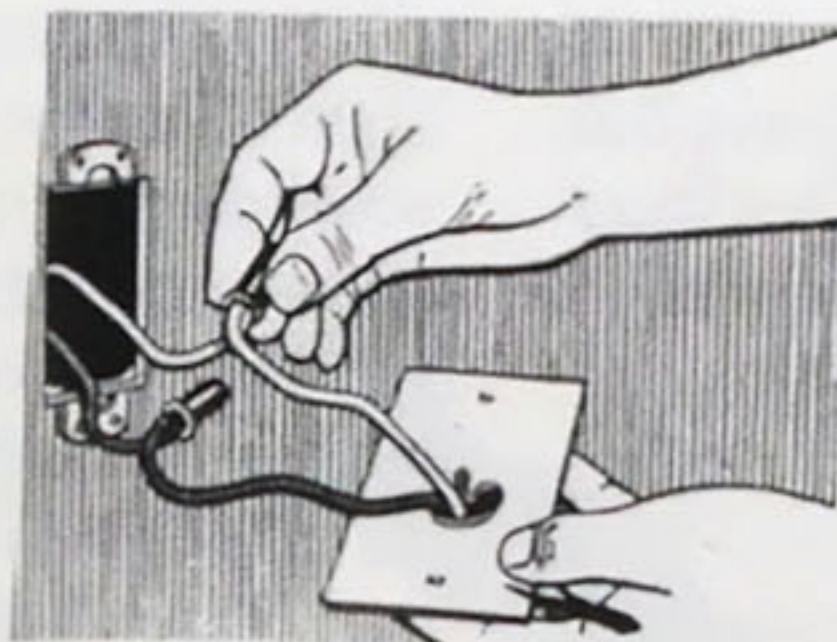
## HOW THE CAMERA PENETRATES FOG

Individual Super-8 filmmakers occupy a minuscule portion of the cultural map and apart from the occasional inclusion in broader gauge events where we expose ourselves to a culture of patronage and perverse conformity, the Super-8 filmmaker is mostly confined to an overgrazed and barely sustainable, but nevertheless, immaculately fenced paddock. The Melbourne International Film Festival is underway again as I write and I wonder whatever happened to the Super-8 component of that event. I can't recall any explanation being made to the S-8 members when the decision was made to scrap the single session at the State Theatre. Was there a trade off? Did MIFF offer us anything? It is now incredibly difficult for Super-8 films to get selected for The Melbourne International Film Festival. My film, SUBTOPIA was unsuccessful against 800 international entries in the short fiction category and I have since heard that Super-8 films have a better chance in the experimental section. This seems like a very narrow expectation of Super-8 filmmaking and I would have been better putting my ten dollars to some other use.

Perhaps the personal content of SUBTOPIA has confused me into thinking it is a good film. My first reaction when we were told our baby had Down Syndrome was to spare him (and me) the sad consequences of our discovery and his murder becomes Deborah's dream (perhaps unfairly) in the film. It is a very short film that EXPERIMENTA were not interested in screening either. I was comforted, however, when I read something Jean-Luc Godard said in a recent AGE EXTRA article, 'The Forgotten Legend'. He said "Pictures can no longer bring something new to the audiences because they have it 100 times every day on TV....Its like flowing water. The only thing left is to show more truth about people's lives, but they don't want the truth about that."

As editor of this month's newsletter I have taken on the task of reminding members that acrimony and bitching within the pages of the newsletter towards other S-8 members is really pointless. When it happens it is probably best that we ignore the remarks (they may be made by someone who is struggling with their filmmaking or some other unresolved thing) and get on with making and discussing film. There has been some pressure on me not to include B. Mousoulis's short piece but I was happy to include it on the condition that he put his name to it. I read in it a tacit withdrawal of remarks he made to M. Woods the previous month and although I personally would like him to step out into the light and do it, this could be all that M. Woods gets. A committee member contacted me on the weekend concerned that the Mousoulis piece in this issue was likely to bring the group into disrepute at a crucial time when the group is seeking increased funding. I doubt if anyone will take Mousoulis seriously here but it may be a point worth remembering by anyone wanting to respond to his extraordinary remarks.

G. O'Keefe



# Morality is Vanity (or "Revenge of the Wankers?")

Steven Ball

It's a delicious image: I imagine Jesus Christ, returned to Earth, viewed from below as though on the cross, furiously masturbating in the face of all the born-again, the Catholics, the democrats, the humanists. This image was inspired by John Harrison in his film *Acheronto Movebo* (June Open Screening) and far from suggesting that John views himself as a Christ figure, there is an interesting parallel between the historical Christ sticking it in the faces of priests and Pharisees and John's Foucault-inspired outraged protests at those who are the (self-) appointed guardians of public morality: church and government. John's film entertains a paradox which I'm sure he is, and indeed Foucault was, aware of. It's a problem that, as Arthur Rimbaud would have it, was born with Christ who provided the model for subsequent self-righteous mediocrities. A self-righteous mediocrity will rail against the corruptness of those guardians of morality appealing to other moral 'rights', such as human rights or freedom of speech. Foucault recognised the precariousness of this position, the self-righteousness of the "I" of the author and, unsuccessfully, proposed the notion of the "death of the author". There is no 'answer' to this paradox as, of course, a paradox is circular and contradictory and represents only itself. In placing himself in his film John Harrison embodies the paradox of self-righteous morality and these contradictory shifting positions: what else is there to do but to masturbate. One would hope that this wonderfully complex and challenging film is beyond morality, beyond reasoning and explanation and is it for that that moralists object to this kind of image, because it appeals to purely self-administered pleasure for and of itself? It reminds me that Foucault (again) was concerned about his awareness of the Fascist within himself.

Some people use the words 'wanker' and 'fascist' as pejorative terms, and to those of you who do I recommend the work of a real-life 'Christ-like' self-righteous mediocrity Mr Bill Mousoulis. I can't really understand quite what it was about Maeve Wood's article "Noise Marvellous Noise" (May newsletter) that produced such an angry, self-righteous, defensive, condescending and petulant outburst ("Revenge of the Artists?", June newsletter), but I can only congratulate Maeve for (albeit unwittingly) soliciting such a response. How these moralists reveal their vanity! For someone who professes to 'openness' on one hand, on the other there are some pretty closed notions of what 'an artist' 'should' be: "...even tempered"? "...self concentrated"? a bit of myth-making there surely. And what is Bill's problem with 'artists' anyway? Apart from anything else this scurrilous piece of venomous writing merely served to make us all more aware of the prejudices, insecurities and assumptions of the writer. His recent films have been pretty much self-absorbed (*Rich Woods '95* and *Abbots Ford*), although not without some interesting ideas (even if none of them are Bill's!), but this self-absorption doesn't appear to go as far as self-reflection or contextualisation.

(If I can borrow the Bill-mode for a moment: listen Bill, you're a big boy now. It may have escaped your notice but there are a number of people who interpreted many things about the way you ran the group all those years ago (many of the writings you published in the newsletter, the way your presence reverberated through the group, the self-important way you refer to yourself, your own and the work of those you favoured) as being a particularly overarching egotistical attempt to stamp your vision of what a film group should be. It is my, and that of a number of other people's impression, that this created the image of a group

that was a boy's club, rife with cronyism, matey aggrandisement and misogyny. In short a bunch of wankers. It's not that "...bad reviews of films don't count" it's the reverberations that surround the hype that you have perpetuated for, of and by yourself. How many articles have you written that contain 'disclaimers', ceaseless professions of 'humility' and 'openness', the championing of naivety, the talk of 'legends', the hokey suburbaneity, the insular cliqueness? "Openness" indeed! I agree with Maeve in as much as the group is better now and the main reason being that it has moved away from the Mousoulis domination. It is debatable whether you are even aware of the way the presence of your personality has resonated through the group, has coloured its image, has turned people away. The blinkered 'clubbiness' of it all, I believe, is one reason why the group still struggles to be taken seriously outside its own membership and also why it has difficulty attracting more funding. All this is debatable I know, but I do know a number of people feel the same way. Your failure to recognise the impression you have, knowingly or not, made is in itself a problem, not for you but for the rest of us who have to live with it. This is all revisited in the opinionated tone and style of "Revenge of the Artists?" and threatens a return to those old days, (self-) justified by your renewed participation in committee meetings and your co-ordination (although I must stress not your, or anybody else's, direction) of the festival. Put your head back in your shell and get on with some real work. We can do without the arrogant, competitive tit-for-tat.)

Apologies to the other readers. I was worried about criticising Bill's article as it is in danger of giving him an attention he doesn't deserve. It also indulges in the sort of inter-group self-referentiality that is potentially destructive, but if these things go unmentioned where are we? It is a symptomatic example of a bigger problem.

I do agree with Bill about one thing, which is the danger of indulging in too much mutual back-slapping. I take it as a given (although not for granted) that the work going on is incredibly interesting. Some recent films have been tremendous. The audiovisual experiment by Barry Brown (**poss(s) bath-tub**), the rigorous investigation of location (**Round-a-bout**) by the currently prolific Tony Woods and Gary O'Keefe's construction of the aspirations of small town Australia **Hope Town** at the last open screening were, for me, highlights in a screening of films that were all of a high standard by any applicable criteria. John Harrison's films cry out for somebody to talk about them, to be taken seriously. And this is the problem. There is very little contextualisation of this work. Nobody is taking the trouble to critically investigate what is going on here. The open screenings are getting cosy and the work is suffocating. In this newsletter there is an opportunity for anyone to engage with the work in print, to exercise critical faculties, to review, to open up discussion, to exchange ideas.

This is partly what was intended with the May "Sonic Eight" issue that I edited. I was interested in giving a context in which one could talk about an aspect of the work that is not often discussed, to provide a catalyst for some interesting writing, and I feel it was reasonably successful. The high standard of the current work immediately raises the stakes. There is a need for intelligence and no time for complacency or irrelevant bitchiness. Then what do I find in the following month: "Revenge of the Artists?", I ask you!

We are caught in a net of our own making. (The "our" and "we", I refer to is the group as a collective and its commit-

tee: a committee which faces the task of being 'democratically' elected and having a 'mandate' or a responsibility to define and carry out group policy, as representatives of that group, as defined and discussed from time to time.) We all agree on a general principle of 'openness' and access as embodied in the open screening and the editorial policy of the newsletter and then we find elements creeping in that go against our individual, and sometimes collective, notions of what is acceptable. And this is where we encounter a complex range of reactions, or should it be non-reaction, to particular films, opinions and personalities. For example two films screened at the May Open Screening have passed without comment to date. **What the Peg Saw** by Phil Jakubik featured a trite narrative line depicting the murder of a woman to which the only witness was a clothes peg! The dubious anthropomorphism of this conceit did nothing to conceal the fact that this was a film made by a boy who thinks it is acceptable to base a narrative around the event of violence against a woman. It tacitly reinforces the notion that a woman (read 'women') will inevitably be hanging out the washing and as such understandably be prey for a stalking murderer. Another manifestation of a similar assumption was to be found in **Wait** by Rohan Zerna, and perhaps more perniciously for not being so upfront. In this case the woman was framed and shrouded within a 'tasteful' 'stylish' black and white dramatic non-event, waiting for a telephone call which culminated in lingering shots of a phone call that seems to not be answered: a dangling receiver. Why do we tolerate this sort of unquestioning acceptance, worst still the naive reworkings of these paradigms, without comment? Why did nobody point out the problematics of these films in the newsletter after the screening? Thankfully there was **Normal Bias** by Matthew Rees in the "Sonic Eight" programme to redress the balance. In comparison with the above mentioned and in their close proximity, this film displays a far more sophisticated and intelligent exploration of the genre. The narrative is less determined, the gender power relationship refreshingly obscure and the 'deconstructive' use of two different music texts with the same set of images a clever, but not smart-ass, reflective device.

Some of the most interesting independent film work being produced in Australia is to be seen every month at the open screenings. An incredibly high level of investigation of the medium. But also some of the most awful schlock. I often wonder what an outsider attending these screenings or reading this newsletter must think. ("What the fuck are these people up to?"). This exists in a group perpetuated climate of unquestioned acceptance. I am far from suggesting vain self-righteous moralisation or worse still censorship, but we're all big girls and boys now and a bit of intelligent discussion, without bitterness or blame, about the films, about the group, towards a really open awareness of its position in the overall picture is much needed before the group is swallowed up by its own insularity.

## MAKING A STATEMENT

I've been a member of the Super-8 Group now for about a year, and I just don't know what to make of it. I've gone to some Open Screenings but I haven't enjoyed the films they're not my kind of thing. I've hired a camera from the Super-8 office and shot a couple of rolls - I like Super-8 and I hope to make a film by the end of the year (maybe for the festival?). But I'm pretty busy studying, so we'll see how things go.

I know one other member of the Super-8 Group, but he's now in New York. I've spoken to a few people at the screenings, but I don't really know any of them. I know Tim, the administrator, but I'm not sure who the others are, although some faces are becoming familiar. I know some of the names, like Steven Ball, Tony Woods, Bill Mousoulis, but I don't know which face belongs to which name.

Anyway, the point of all this: why is the Super-8 Group like a boy's club? Aren't there any women making Super-8 films? (I think there was one film by a woman at the last screening, maybe two, I can't remember.) And why aren't there different kinds of films, with humour or with emotional power - something cheeky or angry or making a statement? It's all just this experimental stuff, which is a bit dry, you know?

I just find the Super-8 Group a bit for the insiders of it. Like Bill Mousoulis' article in the last newsletter - I don't know what he's on about. He could be right, but who cares? I went back and re-read Maeve's supposed "attack" on him and couldn't really see much in it. Bill may be right in what he's saying, but he's a bit over-the-top about it all. And it's all negative karma - why stir the pot? We should be positive, and help each other make our films, have a good time.

Tim in the office has been friendly and helpful with his advice. But all the other guys I see at the screenings - who knows?

Anyway, I don't want to be negative - no, not at all. I'm glad the Super-8 Group is around. Let's make some films!

LIBBY SOUL

B. Mousoulis



# IN THIS LIFE'S BODY

... Ten Years Later ...

by Corinne Cantrill

We are constantly being asked by people who have not seen *In This Life's Body* when is it going to be shown again. It therefore seemed a good idea to run it as a fund-raising event for the Super 8 Film Group, and to hope that all the people who asked us to show it will come along to see it on Thursday, 27th July!

When we made *In This Life's Body* (1982-1984) we thought of it as a very personal film. It was filmed on 16mm black and white reversal, and we never even made a workprint for editing purposes. All the early screenings were done by projecting the original film with the narration on 1/4 inch tape, or live voice. The first screenings were for friends, and then a short season at La Mama in May, 1984, under the title 'Journey Through a Face'.

The response to the La Mama season was so positive that we knew we had to take this film more seriously, and complete it as a printable film with an optical sound track – all 2 1/2 hours of it! (It was not funded.)

The film has been shown very widely, world-wide. It has just had its second screening at the Pompidou, in Paris, and it is to be shown again at the New York MoMA later this year as part of a 3 month Retrospective of Australian Cinema'.

In making the film, I wanted to confront a whole set of clichés and stereotypes current in biographical documentaries. (Documentary is still the most widespread genre of filmmaking, and therefore the most prone to forms becoming worn-out through overuse.)

I especially wanted to avoid going to the archives for historical footage, sounds, images, to create the social context of the decades I have lived through – going to the archives for the same material that everyone else is using in biographical films. I have restricted myself to the material in my own personal archive, with all its gaps, blanks, missing parts. The story told of my life is selective, based around the material I have. Important friendships and friends are omitted because there is nothing to document them.

The film is simple and austere. Black and white, constantly repeated images of still photographs. No panning or zooming to make the film more interesting. The single images are varied by 'recapitulation' clusters of photographs at the end of the main periods of my life. The film is strongly about genres of still photography, some of which have now disappeared.

The sound is even more austere than the image. There are no sound effects and no music to make the film more attractive to the viewer. Although music is very strong in my memory for every part of my life, from the youngest age, to have used music in the film would have made it too much like other biographical documentaries.

The narration is not 'conversational' – one possibility would have been to record conversations with friends, but that would have been too diffuse

and not enough could have been told – instead, it has been written and re-written to make the narration as concise and well-written as possible – the opposite of the 'conversational'.

In the film I speculate on my life, on family, generations, fate, death. With billions of us now in the world we realise how insignificant each of us are, here for a fleeting moment in the great scheme of things. Realising our insignificance, perhaps it is important for each of us to have an autobiographical project in some form, to make our mark in the world for a small moment of time.

In 1995, more than 10 years after the film was completed, I am more deeply pessimistic about the future of humanity. In the film's narration there is a line: 'I want to be actively aware of evolving consciousness. Life is not mere reproduction, but evolution – in every meaning of the world.' Since writing that, I now feel that humanity is flawed with an inherent cruelty, malevolence, venality, self-interest, stupidity. At this point it is difficult to perceive an evolving human consciousness.

—Corinne Cantrill



**THE MELBOURNE SUPER 8 FILM GROUP**  
PRESENT

A Special Fundraising Screening of  
**IN THIS LIFE'S BODY**

by Corinne Cantrill

Thursday July 27th 1995

7:30 pm

ERWIN RADO THEATRE :

211 Johnston Street, Fitzroy.

ADMISSION \$8 (\$6 concession)



# ANNIE MAY SHONE!

"ANNIE MAY SHONE..."  
by Mike Brown ... dated about  
1973... Standard 8... 12 minutes.

Also: "27 Alex" by M.B. &  
Darryl Tilson ... 1986... Super 8  
with soundtrack by M.B./D.T.  
2 minutes...

(FOLLOWING SCRIPT BY M.B.)

"Annie May Shone..." :- Thought it does not feature the famous glamour queen Annie May, this rubbish-tip of Dadaesque animated inconsequence displays high artistic disregard for even the <sup>one of</sup> elements of cinematic or other craft, resulting in the worst technical screw-ups of the century, for a serious-minded art film... Yet bloody hell, it took me months to make this disastrous footage, during which time I was blissfully unaware that the camera's light meter wasn't working at all.....

I've always been basically a painter, but the possibilities of moving images have fascinated me since I was a teenager when I often scratched images onto black 35mm film. 'Annie', which is just footage, not coherent enough to be a film, was simply an attempt to add the element of motion to the kinds of drawing painting & collage I was doing at the time (early seventies). I certainly found that the added element of movement gave the images a spontaneous life-of-their-own and an unpredictability difficult to rival in static art.

I began art as a member of the infamous "Annandale Imitation Realist" group (with Ross Crothell and Colin Lanceley) (62). The curious spontaneity I found in

animation relates this work strongly to the reckless inanity/insanity of Imitation Realism.

"27 Alex" This footage records in animated fashion the evolution of painting done collaboratively ~~off~~ on a wall by me and Darryl Tilson. Darryl is better at technical stuff than I am so the quality's a little better... The soundtrack was also made by me and Darryl, in 1995...

(What shall I do with this space left unused at the end of the page?)

I don't care  
but Annie does!

ART IS  
BEAUTIFUL

## LAST OPEN SCREENING FILMS

(Tuesday 13th June, 1995 - Cafe Bohemio, 354 Smith St, Collingwood)

### AT 7:30 - Films by John Harrison

**BLINK** (1993, colour, 10mins S8)

**MUDRASA** (1993, b/w & colour, 27mins S8)

**ACHERONTO MOVEBO** (1994, b/w & colour, S8)

### OPEN SCREENING FILMS

**Mad Mouse** - Moira Joseph (2 mins 15 secs)

**Abbot's Ford '95** - Bill Mousoulis (6 mins)

**round a bout '95** - Tony Woods (13 mins 20 secs)

**6 Sequences for Jordan** - Irene Proebsting (3 mins)

**Poss(s) Bathtub** - Barry Brown (6 mins)

**Day & Night at Southbank** - Peter Lane (4 mins)

**Green to Green** - Peter Lane (3 mins 20 secs)

**Hopetown** - Gary O'Keefe (4 mins)

**Australia Day '95** - R & S Bourke (3 mins)

**Life in Hell** - Peter Clements (10 mins)

## NEXT OPEN SCREENING Films by Mike Brown

7.30pm, Tuesday 11th July,  
ERWIN RADO THEATRE, 211 Johnston St,  
Fitzroy. (see article inside)

followed by an Open Screening  
BYO films!

Free Entry (Donations Accepted)

### COMING EVENTS

July 27th, 7:30pm:

*In This Life's Body* by A & C Cantrill

September 8th, 9th, 10th

**SUPERKIOSK 8**

October 10th:

**DECA...**

# DECA...

DECAde, DECAy, DECAgon, DECAgram, DECAgence, DECAnt...

Yes, as part of the Group's 10th Anniversary, The 10th of the 10th, (Oct 10th 1995) is the DECA... night Open Screening, and we are calling on Super 8 filmmakers to make films with DECA... as a theme. These will be presented as a programme similar to the P+Ors programme in 1993. All filmmakers who bring along a DECA... film to the October Open Screening, will receive a roll of Kodak K40 silent film to replace the one used in the programme. There is a maximum of 10 minutes, and it must run at 18fps. See last issue of the newsletter for further info, or call Tim or Steven at the Group.

# 10

Editorial and Layout by Gary O'Keefe

Contact Number: 03 9417 3402

Fax: 03 9417 3804

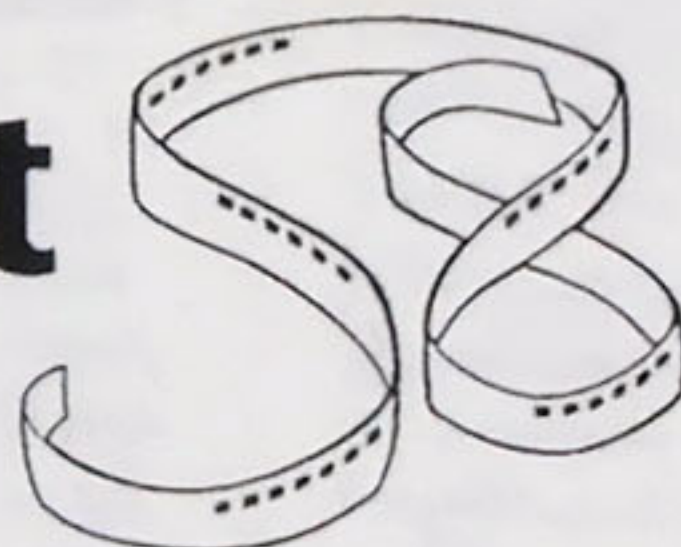
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# Super Eight



If undeliverable return to:

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