

Super Eight

Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc.
ISSUE 105 AUGUST 1995

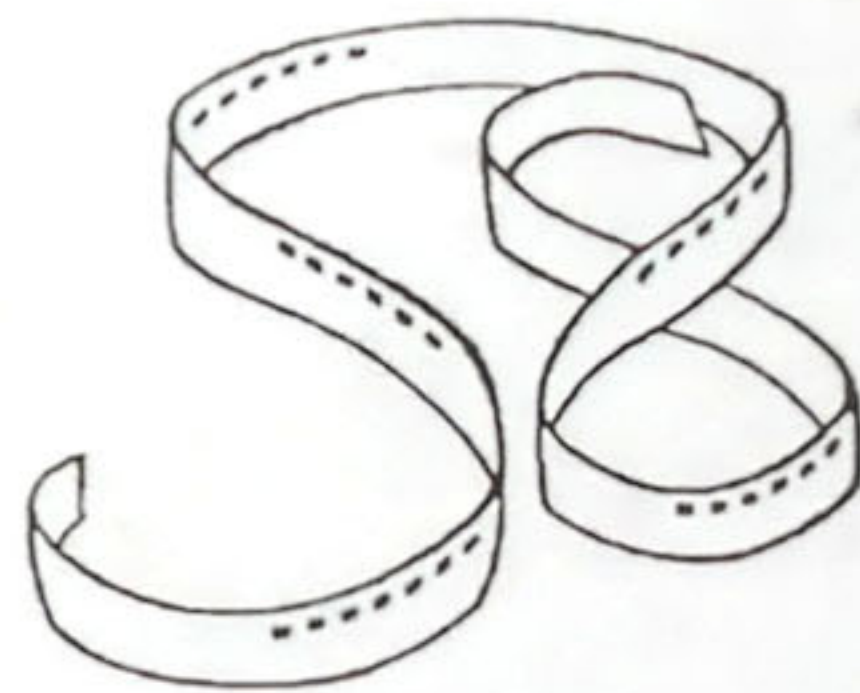


Image from THE LOVE STORY courtesy of Cantrill's Filmnotes.

Rising Floods...

Next Open Screening:
The films of Dan and Nick Flood

The August Open Screening's 7:30 slot will be featuring the films of Nick and Dan Flood. The following notes are from Cantrill's Filmnotes...

"Every member of the audience should be given a sack of salt as they enter the cinema. Personally I find these films very transitory & the impression they leave on my memory is like that of a fingerprint on silly putty. I have extremely vivid recollections of my childhood, we all have, it is as if I sensed that these would be a major source of inspiration for the future. But our idyllic childhood was tragically & abruptly terminated when our dear friend Nikolas died in October 1987."

cont'd from page 1. The films of Nick and Daniell Flood.

"These films are not for the serious ponderer, they are 5 minutes of fun. They are over the top, under-budgeted, over-acted & under-developed & this is their accessible charm."

•MEDDLE (1986) SUPER 8, SOUND, APPROX. 7 MINS.

MADE BY NICKOLAS FLOOD, DANIELL FLOOD AND CLAIRE PARADINE.

A morning in the life of four sex symbols. These exemplary figures, with their social etiquette are role models for hundreds.

•THE PLATE (1986) SUPER 8, SOUND, 6 MINS.

DIRECTOR:DAN FLOOD. CAMERA:NICK FLOOD

Jabbed the film with pins and scratched the film so it would look older.

Saddened by life, he finds in a kitchen plate all the joy he has been missing. The plate is every thing. Unable to contain his happiness, he skips around gleefully... Only to get his foot caught in a tram track. The tension mounts as a tram approaches, his plate smashes and he is back in misery.

•OPERATIC (1986) SUPER 8, SOUND, 15 MINS

DIRECTOR:DAN FLOOD. CAMERA:NICK FLOOD. WITH MAJ GREEN AND NICK FLOOD.

A comedy about a jaded Melbourne opera singer who is under the delusion that she has audiences everywhere; streets, parks, carparks, and even children's play grounds. Suddenly her grand illusion fades before her eyes & she drowns in a flood of her own tears.

•I SKI (1986) SUPER 8, SOUND, 3 MINS

MADE BY DAN FLOOD, NICK FLOOD AND CLAIRE PARADINE.

•THE WORLD STOPS SPINNING [WHIPLASH] (1987) SUPER 8, SILENT, 5 MINS (PARTLY ANIMATED)

DIRECTED BY NICKOLAS FLOOD AND CLAIRE PARADINE.

THIS WAS THE LAST FILM MADE BY NICKOLAS FLOOD.

The world spins at 1,000 m.p.h. But one day Midas brakes stop its rotation & the world is thrown into a state of whiplash.

•EVENT HORIZON (1988) SUPER 8, SOUND, 5 MINS.

DIRECTOR:SARAH KING. ACTOR:DAN FLOOD.

•PHOTOCOPY MAN (1987) SUPER 8, SILENT, 5 MINS.

DIRECTED BY NICK FLOOD.

•PORTRAIT LOOP (1989) SUPER 8, 10 MINS.

DIRECTED BY SARAH KING.

The films of Daniell and Nickolas Flood will be shown at the next Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Open Screening:

Tuesday August 8th, 1995

7:30pm Erwin Rado Theatre

211 Johnston Street, Fitzroy.

Further info:

(03) 9417-3402.

Super Eight

The Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc.

Issue 105, August 1995.

All Advertising Enquiries, contact Tim Patterson on (03) 9417 3402.

The opinions and views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group or it's committee.



Images courtesy of Cantrill's Filmnotes.

Are windows lenses?

July Open Screening Films.

Inside/Outside.....13:20 Colour

Tony Woods has taken off his glasses again, and put on his camera. He shocks me by filming people, at the park... has Tony gone mad and chucked in his art?...

...A man holds up a stubbie and salutes us! Then I realise that Tony is in fact using found footage of people in the mid-1970's (you can never really tell with guys who drink and wear stubbies!)

Mirror Tony reflects, Tony perceives... Tony is an eye, Tony is glasses, Tony is camera, Tony is screen, Tony is perception. Perception is the only drug for an artist... It's the space they inhabit.

At water's edge, it's misty, transitional, and we are submerged into verdant depths. I see a Turner landscape underwater. out of focus and out of glasses Tony is no Turner, but bird becomes spider and tree becomes web. A Ball floats by and our perceptions are instantly revived and alerted. Turner's water again beckons, I laugh... Tony has made a water film, with just a tadpole of editing.

His soundtrack is a bird's nest full of eye incidents and optic safety tips.

Tony stirs the soil... The woods are wet!

OK E.K.6 mins Colour.

Peter Lane makes love to an old EK Holden, with 20 year old film stock... "A double resistance of obsolete technologies"!

Back light is heavily chromed and finned, and ready for action... we wait at its red light. The vehicle is lovingly perused by an affectionate filmmaker at a low, respecting angle. It glistens and gleams and seems to sing as it pulls out of the driveway.

20 year old stock is turning to a blue video haze. Peter drives knowingly, arm out the window holding onto the roof gutter. (Ah, familiar body, the hand falls into a familiar place.) Camera shots mounted on car are rock-steady as car knives through a 20 year old emulsion landscape on Peter's time machine.

The Trades Assistant.....2 mins, Colour.

Irene Proebsting films images digitised off a computer.

Man's face, eyes aglow, sends off vibes, then pulses into another computer-painted abstract-like electronic lino cut.

Industrial Vesper #4.....2.5 mins, Colour.

Barry Brown, films a condemned power station, its gregorian AC/DC days are over. Decaying, with red rusting steel, dead frog spawn reflections, and unfocussed fast frames. And all with a dreading deathknell vesper ringing in our ears... Which moon surfaces us along on its rusty bell bird water dirge plonk soundtrack.

Carniverous Glass..Jennifer Leggett, 7mins, Colour.

Blue watery images swim beneath a frozen surface... red flames of reflected light are split and seperated... Green watery fires burn in a glass-filled pool. Crystallised light caterpillars across the screen, and we seem now to be out in dark space... A glass jar is made to look like flattened nostrils in a lunar landscape.

Tony Figallo sighs in the dark as the filmmaker kills the mystery. A different sort of film now begins. Glass objects on wire brazenly dangle in front of our previously stimulated imaginations. The glass cast assembles, dangling side-by-side then tin tookies away.

A Ted Hughes spider monster menaces a Silvia Plath insect, who shelters under a ball jar.

Loft Life..... Len Horowitz, 12 mins, Colour.

(Projected on a silent ELMO at around 4fps, intermittently (You have to be kidding!))

Shot in a N.Y. loft on single 8, rewind and shot again. It's a cardboard cutout, Javanese Epic shadow puppet film, which moves in 2 directions at once, and where silhouettes merge, movement becomes space and real Tao counterpoint emerges.

Look out your window through a camera lens and you see the universe. The bigger the C.U., the bigger the cosmos.

Feathered..... Maeve Woods, 2 mins, Colour.

Scratched footage of glass needle pine forests, transverse our startled eyes with dark and intense colours which splinter light with crystal scratches.

cont'd on page 10



Le réseau spirale, anciennement Circuit Court, souhaite faciliter la création du film indépendant en proposant des soirées de projection en réunissant des films courts et en mettant en place un réseau de diffusion itinérant.

comme...

Dés maintenant voici une invitation pour participer à la réalisation d'un film collectif sur le thème de l'alphabet.

film de 15"

Chaque participant doit choisir un mot et l'illustrer dans un film super 8 de 15 secondes.

SpiraleS

A L P H A B E T

Où, je désire participer gratuitement au film Alphabet organisé par le Réseau Spirale

Nom : Prénom :

Adresse : Ville : Pays :

Code postal : Tel :

J'ai choisi d'illustrer le mot : Initiale :

Date : / / 1995

Signature :

Bon à retourner, avant le 15 Mars 1995, sous enveloppe affranchie, à :
Circuit Court Marseille, le réseau spirale
43 rue Montgrand 13 006 Marseille Tel : 91/55/6095

A letter has come from Claude Bossion of *Circuit court Réseau spirale* (Short Circuit Spiral Network), a group of independent filmmakers based in Marseille, inviting members of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group to participate in a collective film project: 'ALPHaBET'. Filmmakers are invited to illustrate a word in 15 seconds of film (18 fps), which will be alphabetically ordered in the final film. They have so far had 14 films made, leaving the following letters of the alphabet available: A, B, E, H, J, L, M, N, O, P, T, Z.

Pete Spence has offered to co-ordinate any Melbourne contributions to the Alphabet project. As 15 seconds is only 4 feet, Pete will probably join up the contributions on one reel before sending them to Marseille. Pete's telephone number is 9534 2456.

If Melbourne Super 8 Film Group members contribute to the project the completed film will eventually be sent out to Melbourne for screening here.

Circuit court Réseau spirale runs film programs under the banner of 'Films sans qualité' at various venues in Paris, Marseille, Grenoble - wherever it is possible. Claude Bossion describes 'Films sans qualité' as a label for work from experimental to underground. He hopes to come to Australia next year with programs of this group's work, and he would like to make contact with filmmakers here to arrange exchanges of programs, etc. Two members of the group, Claude Bossion and Philippe Stepczak have each sent short films for SUPER KIOSK 8. Claude describes his film, GOUIZETTE as 'humoristic, decadent with derision, ironic'.

If anyone wants to make direct contact, here's the address:

Claude Bossion
Circuit Court Réseau spirale
43 rue Montgrand
13006 MARSEILLE, France
Fax and Telephone:
33+ 91 55 60 95

THE FILMS OF JOHN HARRISON

I want to write about John Harrison's films, recently screened at a Melbourne Super-8 Open Screening. John introduced me to the art and practice of super-8 filmmaking, and it is precisely the inter-relation between art and practice that his films explore. Most super-8 filmmakers work outside the production and distribution networks of mainstream commercial media. Super-8 also largely functions outside the dominant bureaucratic and cultural networks of film funding and media discourse. John Harrison is a filmmaker acutely aware of the context within which Australia media and film operates. He does not view super-8 as merely a training ground to "real" cinema (though all his film-work involves a process of self-education); nor is he just interested in the formal qualities of super-8 as a means by which to develop an individual experimental filmmaking style (though, again, that is not to say his films are not infused by his love in the aesthetic pleasures and possibilities of the super-8 medium). But as is evident in his films, John Harrison is an artist with a social conscience: that conscience is written within the very construction and content of his film work.

Acheronto Movebo, in particular, is a controversial film in that its purpose is to interrogate and unsettle a viewer's complacency in digesting media images. The film was (partly) made as a response to the Western Australian Attorney-General's decision to ban screenings of Pasolini's *Salo* in that state. Utilising Michel Foucault's theoretical writings on ethics and sexuality, Harrison's film begins in a kitchen. A wavering camera moves around a group of adults as they all interact with the smiling baby which is the focus of this first section. Abruptly the film shifts its focus from the domestic interior to the world "outside". In a blistering series of images the film explores a contemporary landscape dominated by a continual assault of commercial, civil and sacred images, all juxtaposed freely against each other, but all involved in the process of inscribing the economic and moral value of the body. Overlaid on these images is an abrasive soundtrack which includes fragments from Foucault's writing. The film keeps returning to an image of the filmmaker masturbating. In this context the opening scenes, which initially may be read as an innocent representation of family, need to be rethought: the supposed "natural" categories of family, of heterosexuality, are exposed as dependant on a social order which regulates the body in order to extract the maximum economic and political value from sexuality (whether in its sacred or pornographic guise).

In July's Newsletter Steven Ball argued that *Acheronto Movebo* details how the taking up of any moral position, no matter how radical or liberatory it may seem, always acts to reinstate and consolidate power relations which regulate desire. He views the recurrent return to the masturbating filmmaker as a demonstration of this ethical paradox: all politics, all morality - and by extension - all art is a wank. Though I think that *Acheronto Movebo* confronts this paradox, I don't believe that the film advocates a depoliticised acquiescence to "pleasure for pleasure's sake" which Steven Ball seems to imply. There is another recurrent image in the film, a continual return to the filmmaker's quizzical face: he smokes a cigarette; the camera encircles him; his gaze looks out and confronts the viewer straight in the eye. Rather than accepting a *laissez-faire* abreggation of politics and ethics, I think that *Acheronto Movebo* demands of a viewer that we face the challenge of how we develop a radical humane ethics: an art practice simultaneously strategic and committed.

I don't think it would be tangential to note that there is a certain poetry in knowing that Harrison's study of Foucault has occurred outside the conventional education and cultural institutions of the University and the Film School; and in knowing *Acheronto Movebo* is in part dedicated to the last work of a filmmaker committed to an intellectually rigorous and transgressive cinema. Whatever the difficult and critical positions Foucault and Pasolini took in their pursuit of a political ethics and practice, they were both involved in a struggle that can still be understood as anti-fascist. *Acheronto Movebo* speaks of this struggle.

If I admire *Acheronto Movebo*, I love Harrison's *Mudrasa*. The first time I saw it I was entranced by the visual beauty of its individual segments: the dream-like comedy of the foot dancing with the egg to Indian singing exercises; the sensual rhythm of the shots as two women dance to Eno/Byrne's *Regiment*; the muted light as the dancers paint their bodies. But on a second viewing I was also struck by the filmmaker's attempt to seriously engage with the dance troupe's efforts to combine elements of Indian dance and western modern dance in a contemporary and relevant fusion. *Mudrasa* is the kind of documentary about music you wish would be made more often: vibrant and expressive of the joy found in music and dance.

In the July newsletter John Harrison's films were discussed in the context of an article calling for more members to contribute their writing and thoughts to the newsletter. As a recent member to the Melbourne Super-8 Group, and up to now, an uninvolved member, I do not feel fit to write on the political and critical debates about the future of the Super-8 group. I will say that John Harrison taught me that there is a value in the relative small number of people utilising super-8 as a medium (as compared to video, 16mm, multimedia etc. etc.). It allows for more accessible discussion, and allows for an encouragement and support which is maybe difficult to find in more competitive practices. I hope that the debate on the future of the group is valuable. I'd like to express my excitement at having viewed the work of a filmmaker (and especially an Australian filmmaker) whose poetics are both intellectually stimulating and which express a joy in the art of filmmaking. His films make me want to pick up the camera and make films. And I think that is what super-8 filmmaking is about.

Christos Tsiolkas



FIREMEN WHO WEAR GAS MASKS

Ongoing replies by representatives of injured parties over things written in previous newsletters must have very limited appeal to most readers but I consider Steven Ball made some extreme comments in the July issue to, and about, Bill Mousoulis that deserve a reply. I would be content to let it rest except that there are people who have joined in recent years who may take Steven Ball's version of events as authentic, especially a statement like "It is my, and that of a number of other people's impression that this (referring to the Mousoulis domination) 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." That is a very narrow view and reckless in the use of other people's impressions and, as these assertions rely on "impressions", the author is not put upon to present instances and events to back up the claims. Substantiating this view or "impression" would be difficult for him because if he is referring to the time that Bill Mousoulis was the S-8 Group's administrator then, correct me if I'm wrong Steven, but that time mostly precedes your involvement with the Super-8 group. I also can not agree that the "Mousoulis domination" of the Super-8 has turned people away as Steven Ball claims. The reasons people leave the group are complex but some names that come to mind; Mark Freeman, Laki Sideris, Richard Touhey, Les Hillis, Mark La Rossa, Mark Zenner, Ian McIntosh, David Cox and Chris Windmill who have either left or have had less involvement with the S-8 Group lately, these filmmakers have worked within what could be loosely termed, narrative frameworks and I expect were mostly encouraged by any Mousoulis critique. Steven Ball then goes on to lay the blame for the groups "difficulty attracting more funding" and "struggle to be taken seriously" at the feet of Bill Mousoulis and while he concedes that it is debateable, nevertheless "know(s) a number of people who feel the same way." This is drawing a very long bow and I struggle to take any of it seriously. There is a failure in his article to grasp the wider issues that face the group regarding it's image within a larger film community and it's ability to attract respectability and funding. We gain attention and respect through our films. Its as simple as that. The bullshit, the hype and hyperbole comes after. It is simplistic in the extreme to be holding any one individual responsible for this sense of failure and despair. I understand that the Melb. S-8 Group in the Mid-80's was a very different scene to what we have now. It grew out of a culture that was an inner-city, campus film club and it was enlarged when individuals joined from off campus and in 1985 became the Melbourne Super-8 Group. There have been women involved both in creative and administrative roles in the life of the S-8 Group and I couldn't see how they could have stayed had it been as matey and misogynistic as Steven Ball claims. In fact Sarah Johnson, an early committee member recently wrote of "trying to involve more women members..." (May 1995 Newsletter) in the years following the S-8 Group's formation.

If the members did exhibit an exaggerated opinion of themselves and their work, with the occasional elevation of a "mate" to legendary status, you could call it wanking or say they had an intense belief in themselves. "The Celluloid Heros", screened recently on ABC TV, presented the cultural map of our cities as regards filmmaking in the time directly preceding the Super-8 group i.e. irrelevant, unnecessary, unmasculine. The way Governments established a film industry with injections of cash and the tax minimalisation 10BA, demonstrates that there was barely an indigenous experimental film culture to aspire to. Australian men tend to view male filmmakers with suspicion and confusion and can't bear to see other men arranging things for an aesthetic pleasure. You could forgive a certain "insularity" in these conditions.

My view is that the criticisms that Steven Ball has of the Melbourne Super-8 group while Bill Mousoulis was administrator are too much of a personal nature (therefore out of place in the newsletter) and fail to take account or attempt to understand the circumstances that surrounded the Group in the 1980's.

GARY O'KEEFE.

GRAEME
MACGREGOR
Burnt out & Bushed
Paintings

TONY WOODS
Selected Works

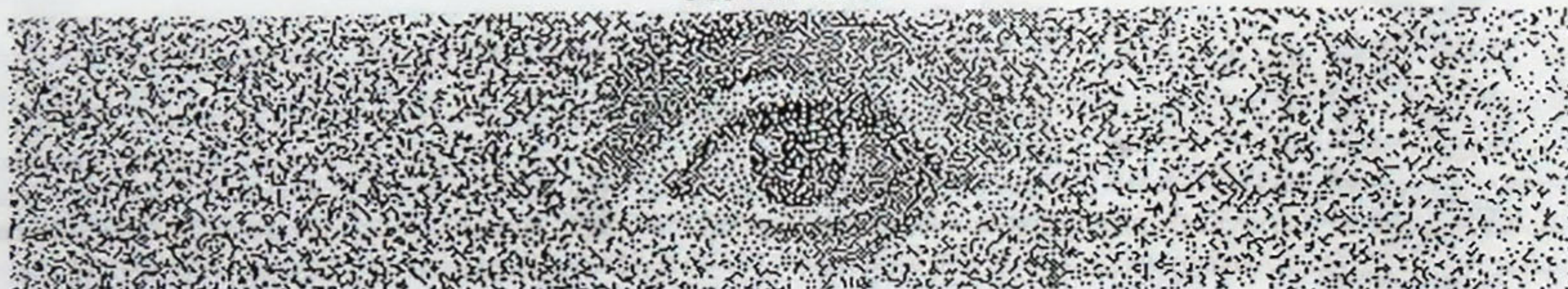
Tuesday, 8th August — Thursday, 31st August 1995

Opening between 3 & 5 pm, Saturday 12th August, 1995

Dianne Tanzer
gallery

WITH AND WITHOUT MIRRORS: PERCEPTIONS OF THE PERCEIVER PERCEIVED

Steven Ball



In this area known broadly as 'personal' filmmaking, there is a notion of the communication of a localised, individual perception: the artist as seer whose work is the transmission of a vision mediated by a unique perception. There is a phenomenological assumption that consciousness (or perception) is consciousness (or perception) of something and that this perception of something is transmittable. This is given credibility in media such as super 8 film when an 'auteur' has direct control over the entire process of the making of a film. However this formulation of artistic activity has, since the invention of film itself and the development of cinematic language, becomes problematic. Unlike media which do not rely on the organised pre-determined progression of images through time, film allows for an acentric viewpoint, a quality that has been comprehensively exploited: in even the most conventional cinematic forms there is a complex and sophisticated language structure. It is common in most narrative film for the whole to consist of an extended succession of individual shots from any conceivable point of view. The mobility of film and cinematic language has had a radical and fundamental influence on the way in which perception can be understood to operate, and this mobility operates spatially and temporally. Essentially perception resides in the perceived and arrives at the perceiver. As it has become acentricised through cinema, perception has acquired a polycentric potentiality, allowing any viewpoint at any time, as in film no image can be said to be derived from any single exclusive privileged viewpoint. Vertov's 'kino-eye' is not to be confused as an anthropomorphised camera more as a disembodied mechanical (although not machinistic) eye autonomous of an imperative to replicate human vision. Post-cinema, post-Vertov and post-Zisstrinian montage the artist returning to a pre-cinematic position of the single or fixed viewpoint surely must have made a conscious decision to take this particular stand.

Rich Woods '90-'95 by Bill Mousoulis (May Open Screening) provides a particularly startling example of the acentricisation of points of view. It is difficult to conceive how one would have viewed this film had it not been prefaced by Bill's introduction of it as a response to the leaving of his home suburb of five years. This predicated the film as 'personal' and indeed most of it conformed to the above mentioned tendency for many super 8 films to be written, as it were, in the first person. It was infused with a sense of nostalgia, an obsessively framed mapping of places which, while interesting as explorations of place, held vastly greater significance for the photographer. The film reaches a point where there is a stark radical shift its point of view, where Bill appears in the shot. This shift from the subjective-subjective to the objective-subjective acts as a startling indication of the acentralising nature of cinematic lan-

guage: this seer turns the camera upon himself, the point of view becomes other than solipsism towards a kind of reflection without mirrors.

Tony Woods is credited as an inspiration for Bill's film and his films to date have mapped responses to, and interpretations of, particular subjects; be they perceptual explorations of the prismatic qualities of light or settings of the work of Samuel Beckett (for example), these have been channelled into certain 'Tony-mediated interpretations'. In *Inside/Outside* (July Open Screening) the perceptual process runs through a set of rarefied explorations: the inclusion of 'found film' (in a most unquestionable definition of that often ill-defined term: unexposed film literally 'found' in a second-hand camera), out of focus images derived from the use of an uncorrected dioptré and images shot through a mirror with the backing scraped off so that we see Tony's reflection and his 'subject' on the same image plane. This latter is a most interesting formulation as of course the filmmaker is also image-subject suggesting a direct plurality of the seer and the seen: done with mirrors but not trickery, illusion without illusionism.

Dirk de Bruyn's Canadian time-lapse studies seem to display comparatively less subjectivity. They are predominantly landscape based but it would be a mistake to leave it there or to dismiss them due to a familiarity with often uncritically over-used time-lapse techniques. These films are not so much studies of landscape but rather, more interestingly, they are studies of time and the progression of shadow and light. The films frame is often static, the camera motionless. The landscape recedes as the dynamics of accelerated movement of shadow and light becomes the primary subject demanding an unusual perception of both time and space. This gives the sense of there being a more 'filmic', non-human, unanthropomorphised perception than would be suggested by, for instance, a hand-held roving camera.

Many of the films being shown at recent open screenings display a practice which privileges some very particular, sometimes singular, explorations of perception. For instance a moving fixed camera position in *Moirá Joseph's Mad Mouse* (June) on a roller coaster ride records the velocity of the ride but perhaps more noticeable is the overwhelming presence of the image of the structure supporting the track which looms like some huge fortress backdrop, all the more monumental when set against a truly dramatic rushing rattling soundtrack. Or at the same open screening Barry Brown's *Poss(s) Bathub* with its liquefied images and wonderful booming minimalist systems music track.

This tendency towards singularity, minimalistic, exploratory and experimental film with a particular emphasis on the perceptual in recent years, often recalls

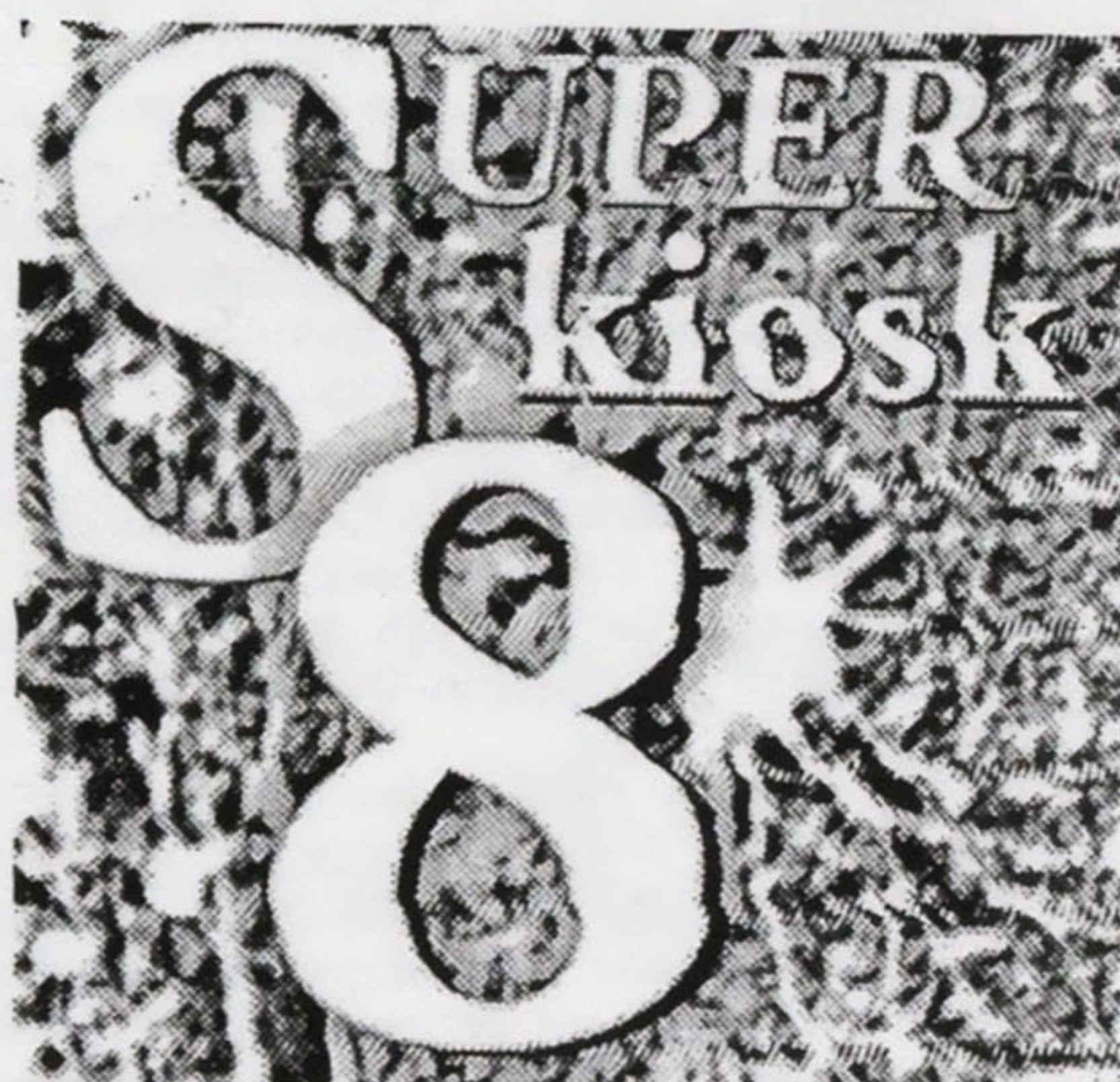
the avant-garde cinematic practice particularly prevalent in the north Americas during the late sixties and seventies. It is interesting to reflect upon this in the context of Michael Snow's recent visit to these shores and the retrospective programmes where there seemed to be a strong affinity between his 'structural' film work and much recent super 8. Indeed there was a sense of commonality when a few of us met round at Tony Woods' place one evening to show Snow some of our films. Equally it was interesting to notice how *Loft Life* (a film from New York made in the seventies by Len Horowitz) when brought to the last open screening by Corinne Cantrill, with its study of shadows and silhouettes, slipped comfortably into place. Maeve Woods introduced her film *Feathered*, stating that it was the first time that she'd (deliberately!) scratched a film (and to devastatingly beautiful effect with vibrant textured colours). In suggesting that it was a fairly common practice she drew an undisputable connection with a tradition of abstract and neo-abstract filmmaking. This implicit association is remarkable because it has become so acceptable, even commonplace, within local super 8 practice, but also because so much of this work compares critically favourably with the work from earlier times. But is this a temporally and spatially isolated practice that has its own developmental conditions and resonances or is it a continuation of an earlier project? Probably both.

Other generic forms of filmmaking sometimes sit uneasily within what could be seen as a concerted 'experimental' practice. These generic positions become tribalised when advocates of a more 'conventional' filmmaking practice such as 'narrative' set themselves up in opposition to more 'unconventional' 'experimental' filmmaking practices. It occurs to me that 'personal' and/or 'experimental' filmmaking can be as uncritical as those who aspire to a 'conventional' 'narrative' practice. Surely there is just as much an established (albeit non 'mainstream' or 'alternative') and equally conservative convention of generic experimental work. One occasionally hears advocates of these more 'conventional' practices accusing the 'experimentalists' of self-indulgence and worse (charges that are not always altogether unfounded). What is more important within a non-generic specific group such as the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group is a critical integrity in all areas of filmmaking. This integrity has been found equally in the work of those who make narratives as experimental filmmakers. In the past filmmakers like Richard Tuohy, Mark La Rosa, Les Hillis and Michael Kelleher (each of whom seemed to have produced little or nothing of late-in Super 8 at least) among others, have produced some fine, serious and critically interesting work as narrative filmmakers. The time should not come when anyone feels intimidated about showing a film at an open screening because of a prevalence of one or another generic practice.

Where these generic distinctions become most interesting is where one notices a crossover, an enmeshing or a hybridisation taking place. Gary O'Keefe's *Hopetown* (June open screening) like many of his previous films, exhibits these qualities. Gary's films always tread a sensitive path through a concern with subject, construction and mediation of material. In the case of *Hopetown* the aspirations of small town Australia are treated to a 'documentary' aesthetic which is both convincingly actual and fictional. Using the acentricised, many points of view

approach afforded by conventional cinematic language it both conforms to and problematises generic expectations. Jennifer Leggett's *Carnivorous Glass* (July Open Screening) begins with a mode of gaseous perception of light through coloured glass which gradually solidifies through an intriguing narrative progression, into an animation of glass and wire insect-like creatures. Rather than falling into the trap of being a simple revelatory now you don't see it, now (hey presto!) this is what it really is, type of affair, the film becomes concerned with the subtle formation of an image and narrative in itself. In doing so it transcends a concern with pure perceptual and formal exploration while retaining a sensitivity to the efficacy of such experimentation. A quiet achievement.

Or is this all simply just more PR for the funding bodies?



The 8th Melbourne
Super 8 Film Festival

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Friday 8th to Sunday 10th September

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WANK, WANK and more WANK

Please don't get me wrong I don't doubt for one second the validity of the Melbourne Super 8 Group, however the July open screening left me pondering as to whether the group exists merely as a public masturbation ceremony rather than an innovative collective. Mudslinging has never been my style, but after last night's tedium I am feeling insensed and extremely flacid.

Pushing aside the contrived mistique, complicated theory and general gobbledygook, basic techniques of film-making are easy. However the majority of contributors last night would have you feel otherwise. Let it be known that a tripod is available for hire at a reasonable rate for all members with trembly knees and there exists various sources explaining how to set the diopter eyepiece of your camera to your eyesight (with or without glasses). If the latter is a problem then 'point and shoot' cameras are the go for you - don't forget to point before you shoot!

I do recognise of course that my cynicism detracts from the general concensus that there are no hard-fast rules in such an innovative little pond, particularly in the technical department. However let us not neglect the most important IDEAS department. Eugene Vale in his 'Technique of Screenplay Writing' says "If the subintention is characterised by the dependance upon the motive, the auxiliary goal is characterised by the law of concentric direction". I say that last night I found no original ideas or intentions in sight, no motivations (except maybe to stain a few trouser legs) no goals gained and absolutely no direction.

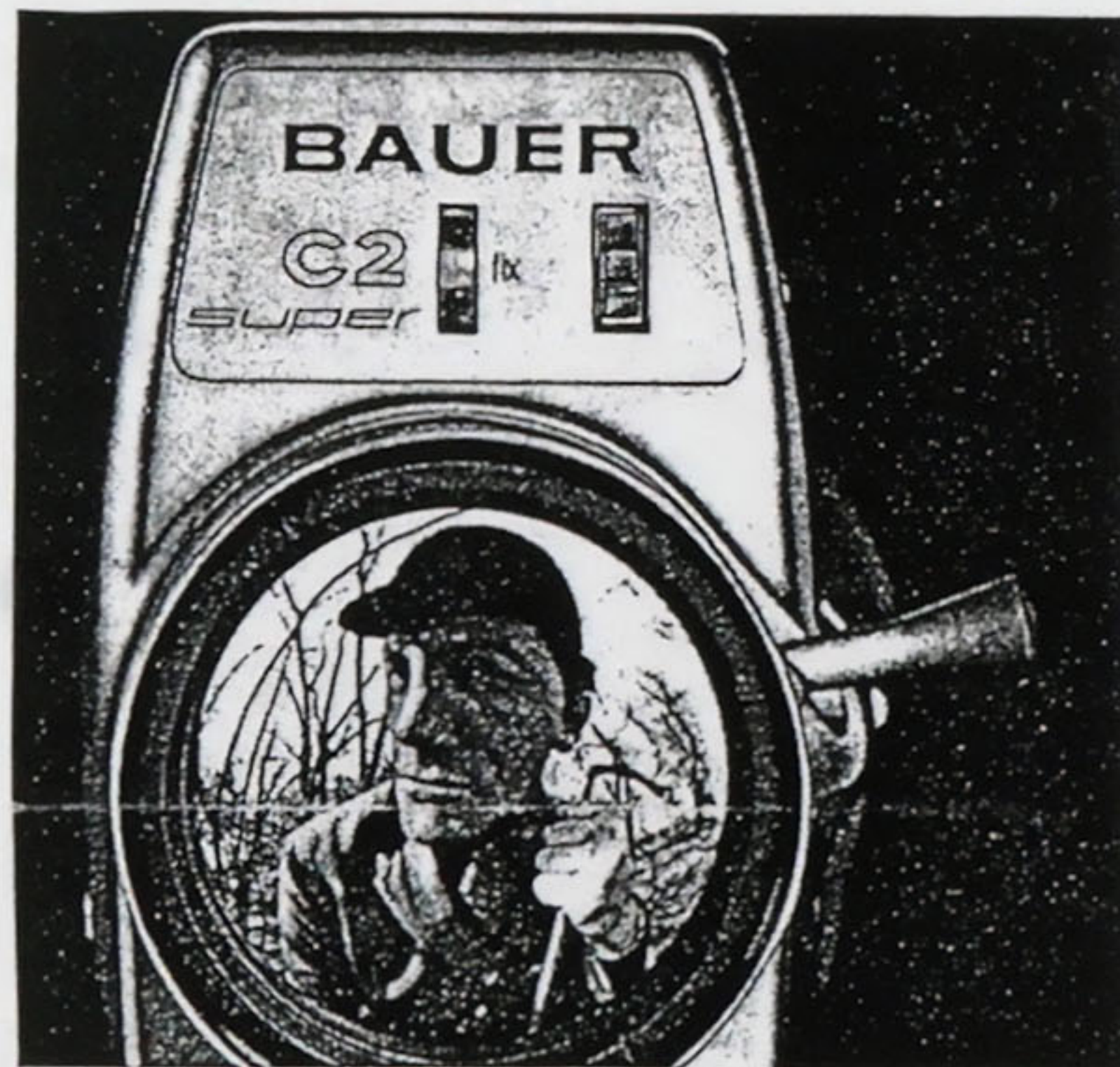
There were however, lots of time-lapses (I've got an intervalometer too Dirk!) a car journey that went nowhere fast, (probably due to blurred vision) a black and white grain charged drama that drifted rapidly from the window of a travel agent to the oblivion of the gutter, and an exercise in toilet humour, which despite its technical excellence, was so lacklustre in purpose, it should have been flushed away with all the other sticky tissues long before it reached celluloid status. I refuse to seriously comment on Trades Assistant, Industrial Vesper, Carniverous Glass and Loft Life, each articulately crafted title belying the salty dollop that followed. Suffice to say, on a more arousing level, Maeve Woods and Corinne Cantrill express simple yet effective techniques indemic with the gauge which may well inspire others in a period of well-earned post-ejaculation. Did I mention that Rodney Bourke has an anomorphic lens?

I totally dismiss the rumour that the ice-age has finally arrived in Melbourne despite what the Swanston Walk defecation squad would have you believe. Bill Mousoulis recently talked about the group evolving from a pond into an ocean with a spirit of openness and accessability. While I applaud this spirit, let us not compromise with rank quality Super 8 films undeserving of an appreciative intelligent audience. Here's hoping this ocean of filmic notion doesn't freeze over, and remember:

WHEN YOU'VE REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU THINK, THEN POINT YOUR CAMERA AND SUPER 8 SPUNK.

HECTOR HAZARD.

TO THOSE WHO CARE: THIS WAS WRITTEN PRIOR TO READING STEVEN BALL'S ARTICLE IN THE LAST ISSUE (ISSUE 104) OF SUPER EIGHT. GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE, WANKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE.



Next time you get an icy stare from the master of hounds, whip out your BAUER and put him down. On film.

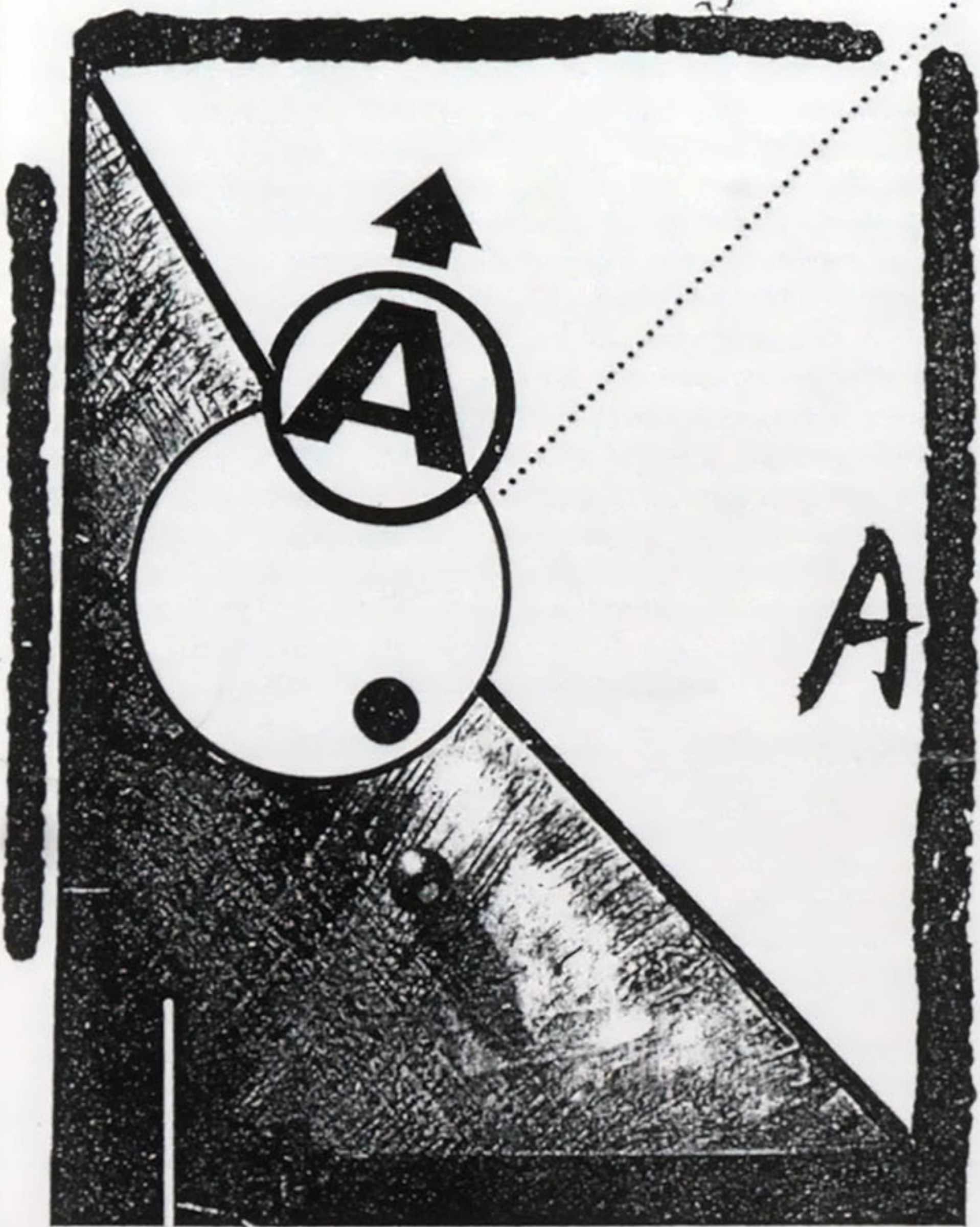
Page eight

Bauer C-2. World's most wanted super 8 camera, with electric eye, spectacular 8-40mm Schneider f1.8 zoom lens, oversize aerial type viewfinder, luxury features galore. Under \$260*. Other cameras, projectors from under \$50*. Write for brochure. Allied Impex Corp., 300 Park Ave. South, New York, N.Y. 10010. In Canada, Kingsway Film Equipment Ltd., Toronto.

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PETE SPENCE



Arthur & Corinne Cantrill

FILMMAKERS AND PUBLISHERS OF 'CANTRILLS FILMNOTES'
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20th July, 1995

Matthew Rees
MELBOURNE SUPER 8 FILM GROUP.

Dear Matthew,

Since the Committee Meeting on Tuesday night, I have had a chance to collect my thoughts about the mass of material we have had to deal with.

As you are the Editor for the forthcoming NEWSLETTER, I wish to express to you in the strongest possible terms my opinion that we should not run that article title WANK WANK WANKER (of whatever it is exactly.) Now, whereas a 'wank' or two might slip by in the body of the article, to have that as a heading in large and noticeable letters is quite unacceptable, and offensive. I suggest that it is offensive in the terms of the AFC contract. And certainly it is offensive to many of the members, and undermining to the NEWSLETTER itself.

There is a strongly held perception that the MELBOURNE SUPER 8 FILM GROUP is a 'Boys' Club', a group of 'good 'ol boys' and the constant use of language that belongs to locker room of a football team is out of place in a film newsletter.

I would like to remind you of the Committee's responsibility to the wider membership of the Group. At our July screening we had a large attendance of members and guests, and guest filmmaker - Mike Brown. The perception of most of us was that it was an outstanding evening with excellent and varied films. This article by Hector Hazard denigrates all the work and all the filmmakers whose work was shown, and films in the face of our shared experience of that excellent evening. It is insulting to everyone who showed their work that night and to our guest. It is simply not good enough for someone to sound off at films as being 'wanks'.

This follows on the piece by 'Libby Soul' which attacked another excellent evening at the June ~~screening~~ ^{screening}. Another piece of irresponsible writing.

In the hard world of the 1990s, this lack of editorial responsibility in the Newsletter is going to count against the Group with the AFC - where the key figures are women. I am sure that they, like me, are quite unimpressed with the Group's constant lapses of judgement in the NEWSLETTER. Well, maybe we consider our high standards of 'No Censorship' to count more than our AFC grant.

AFC aside, let me assure you that many of the Group's members are not amused with the constant lapses of judgement, and the offensive language in the Newsletter. I'd also like to mention, that I personally swear a great deal at home, and in conversation I use a lot of bad language, but I certainly know the difference between what can be said, and where, and what can be written.

Unless the Committee can get a real handle on this issue (and we have not dealt with it adequately at the meeting on Tuesday) then I think we canvass the Group's membership for their opinions and wishes on this matter. Well, maybe there may be so much excellent material sent in the NEWSLETTER that you won't need to publish it at all, but please Matthew, let's not have a title of WANK WANK WANKER.

Corinne Cantrill



Thursday 10 August 1995 at 7.30pm

Erwin Rado Theatre, 211 Johnston Street, Fitzroy 3065.

PASSAGE

A TWO-SCREEN FILM PROGRAM
BY ARTHUR AND CORINNE CANTRILL

In 1995, Arthur and Corinne Cantrill, two major figures in experimental film, celebrate 35 years of filmmaking. MIMA will screen a program of rarely seen 16mm two screen works by these prolific and internationally recognised filmmakers.

1.
RED DISC/ BLUE GROUND MEDITATIONS
(1971, 3 mins.)

2.
METEOR CRATER, GOSSE BLUFF
(1978, 6 mins.)

3.
INTERIOR/ EXTERIOR:
"... to explore a difference between camera and human vision."
(1978, 3 mins.)

4.
CORPOREAL
..... Body/ Breath/ Camera Movements.....
(1983, 18 mins.)

5.
PASSAGE
(1983, 65 mins.)

Tickets available at the door

Full \$7 Concession \$6 MIMA members \$5

MIMA screenings continue with two exciting programs coming soon ..

19 September 1995 at 7.30pm
THE SERIOUS ART OF THE UNSERIOUS (NSW)

8 November 1995 at 7.30pm
DIVERSE DYKES: NEW BRITISH LESBIAN WORK (W.A./London)



P.O. Box 1102 St Kilda South 3182
Tel: 9525 5025 Fax: 9525 5105 email: mima@peg.apc.org

A New Approach to Editing Super 8 Film?

by Corinne Cantrill

We always feel despair at editing Super 8 film, after being used to working with 16mm with good viewers and equipment. Maybe there is a high quality, non-scratching S.8 viewer, but I haven't come across it.

We have tried to edit Super 8 by projecting, making notes on changes to be made, using a strong magnifying lens to locate the shots, and reprojecting the film to assess the change and noting any other changes. Our Elmo ST 180 never scratches, so we can project many times without marking the film.

We have managed to get by with this method, consoling ourselves with the thought that Gregory Markopoulos edited his wonderful 16mm films this way! Now we are working on a very long film, with a mountain of footage to sort through, and lots of very short shots. Just as we were feeling despair about getting a handle on the film a brainwave came – as often happens in the darkest moments!

We tried setting up an audio cassette recorder and as we watched the film (broken down into 300 or 400 feet sections) I carefully described each shot with as much detail as possible, and indicated any changes to be made and why. The shot descriptions would include whether CU, ECU, MS, etc., the direction of the camera movement, the quality of the camera movement, the light quality and all sorts of other information when time allowed.

Before we attempt a recording session we look at the film first, and then again immediately with the cassette recorder in use so that we are very familiar with the film.

We then put the film on the bench with the magnifying lens and replay the cassette while slowly winding the film, stopping and starting and going back over parts if we are in doubt. It is important that every shot is described, so that on the bench an accurate follow through can be achieved, and so any shot which is to be removed, shortened, re-ordered can be easily located.

Apart from the factual information in the recording, the tone of voice is also helpful – one can hear one's own enthusiasm for a shot, or doubts and uncertainties – which is not conveyed from written notes.

The most interesting aspect to this approach is the highly charged state of mental alertness required to be rapidly scanning all aspects of each shot, and to be relating the shot to the previous shots. In the past, trying to make written notes in the dark was always a distraction from closely looking at the film. When just watching a film it's easy to drift off or lose attention. Speaking to the film (almost like calling a horse race or a sporting event) galvanises the eyes and the mind. I wish I'd thought of this approach a long time ago.

And . . . this method offers the possibility of providing an element for the film sound track!

In spite of this, I wish we could find a really good quality Super 8 viewer. And again, this raises the issue of the severe difficulties now in finding Super 8 equipment and materials – whether it's a simple thing like film reels or splicers or whatever. We have recently found that we can get anything from English suppliers (Derann Film Services or the Widescreen Centre) such as Kodak Plus X, colour neg., CIR splicers and splicing tape, a complete range of film reels, while distributors in Australia will not seek out and carry Super 8 materials and supplies. It now seems to be impossible to buy locally a S.8 film reel larger than 400 feet.

The Melbourne Super 8 Film Group should apply strong pressure to suppliers such as Kodak, C.R. Kennedy, Vanbar etc. to keep up their stocks of Super 8 materials.

In particular, Kodak should be pressured to once again make available the striped Ektachrome print stock to laboratories for making Super 8 prints. Film Processors in Adelaide have indicated that if there were sufficient demand for prints Kodak would make this material available again. As a group we must press for that.

It is unfortunate that most Australian Super 8 filmmakers are obliged to use the various film tab systems for splicing film, which compared with rolls of CIR tape are enormously expensive.

In desperation we recently imported some CIR tape from London, and even with the cost of a bank cheque and packing and postage, each roll costs \$6 and provides at least 350 splices. If we were using the tabs system 350 splices would cost \$70! With the savings on two rolls of tape, as compared with 14 packets of tabs, one could buy a CIR tape splicer from England (\$130 each). Maybe the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group should invest in CIR splicers to hire out instead of the tab-costly Würker splicers.

It is of concern that everything is available from England even though the items are not manufactured there (CIR is Italian, and the Kodak material is imported from America) but not available in Australia. It is this opting out on the part of local suppliers that is going to strangle Super 8 filmmaking here. We are all virtually depending now on second-hand equipment to work with.

We need to make our Group voice heard on this issue as forcefully as we can to local distributors.

cont'd from page 3 - Are lenses windows?

No insect could get through these glass beaded fly catchers, swinging in the door of Maeve's perception. Old and dark footage lies behind the forest, which are coloured with overhead projector pens. Deep, dark and satisfying, and like love itself, it's over too soon.

Drifter..... 7 mins (B & W)

The first film by Raymond (Film noir, visual/aural tension) Gemmel. A Harvey Keitel look-alike wanders tense dark, soundtracked streets. Somebody follows, the follower becomes the followed.

Archetype femme fatale shadow waits, her cigarette held... An icon waiting to be lit. He approaches the oldest ritual in film noir, but she declines and lights herself (modern twist) A dark and hurried embrace is pushed away, he follows her along a brooding soundtrack. She stops, he turns, then walks away into the dark grainy soup of a film noir night, and a first film breaks the tape in a narrative finish.

Where are you Bill Mousoulis, when you are needed?
Where are you Ian McIntosh, our nights need painting? Where are you Ooni, less is more?

Thank god for B&W filmmakers and Tri-Xual experiences.

Rather Flushed..... Jeff Norris (5 mins B&W)

A nervously filmed (Great footage Jeff!) neurotic woman opens up a package to find a little, hairless monkey doll? (Actually a Mr Snoid a-la Robert Crumb character) which comes to life and pesters her, disappearing in her flat and jumping on her leg (a-la Crumbo). She flushes it down the dunny... Or does she?

Exceptional use of model, Jeff. The eyes have it!
24fps..... Dirk de Bruyn (15 mins, colour)

Dirk de Canada is time lapsing again. Cars piggy-back and leap frog on a freeway. Tunnels in mountains are entered and simultaneously exited.

Dirk stops for a rainbow (Who doesn't! It's supposed to be God's copyright signature!)

Light sneaks down a driveway like a snake, his camera blows up a stormy mist, which clears to spoon out shadows on both sides of the road. Warner Bros. playground goes through cosmic time, and as usual, the shadows of trees dance to a different drummer. Nature incessantly on the move, with rapturous light gliscendos and like ghosts, shadows go to ground. We can thank Dirk and the Cantrills for taking us again and again to foreign shores and extracting some of the essence of these places in a way no armchair traveller could dream of.

Walking down Swanston Street....(3 mins, colour)

Rodney (Film Alive) Bourke streets us along anamorphic Melbourne. SHot in verticle scope, we play in a Bruno Grollo phallic playground.

Post-modernist R.M.I.T. looks like a calliope! Bubble cars turn into Swanston as Giometti skaters breeze around police as obstacles.

Southgate is metropolised, but finally and thankfully, a wobbly and "squished" tram trundles us back to our stop.

We certainly got off tonight.

Jim Bridges.

A GOOD NIGHT WITH MIKE BROWN AND OTHER ARTISTS:
LOOKING AT SOME OLD STUFF IN NEW WAYS
Maeve Woods

The July Open Screening of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group was particularly interesting in terms of experimental film and its history.

The 7.30 programme was presented by well known Melbourne painter Mike Brown. With slides providing a context for his movies, he showed us images from some of his IMITATION REALIST period, work exhibited with two other artists Crothal and Lanceley. He showed us in particular funky constructions made from timber and other trash. We saw shots of various murals and got some idea of the relationship between wall paintings and their street sites. Mike Brown has been long concerned with art in its social context yet he has never joined the ranks of the Bleeding Hearts and never avoided the personal individual expressions underpinning his art. He also showed us some more recent works in the form of shaped paintings. I have seen some of these objects made up of diamond and triangle elements, sparkling in the boldness of primary colours. His art is not guided by any longings to dominate the technical yet he is always it seems getting in there and making things out of disparate bits of this and that...never never tatty just direct and gutsy in using the machines or materials to hand. I could stretch this and include the texts derived from the world around him in Melbourne's inner city. He designed the cover with its slogan **POWER TO THE PEOPLE** for his recent retrospective in the National Gallery of Victoria. He writes song-like texts across many of his canvasses. They are usually bold and affectionate, sets of hand written words which just make the viewer feel pretty good when she encounters them on any gallery wall.

Together with friend Daryl Tilson, Mike Brown had done a progressive mural painting in the Heide Gallery. It was filmed onto super 8 as a colour and linear build and flow. Very recently (was it last weekend?) Mike and Daryl improvised an appropriate percussion with other simple noises as sound track for the footage. It was properly synchronised to the movements and enhanced the short film from the 1970s. For my taste film sound which is minimal such as this makes the most appropriate compliment for experimental films.

This whole July Tuesday was laced with historical references. Later, after the interval there were both samples of old footage and recent experiments utilising techniques first seen in the standard eight era. Mike Brown's twelve minutes of **Anni Mae Shone** were shot in 1973. He used a camera which was probably not new even then. He says it was suspended by wires from the ceiling and those lights got hotter and hotter as he worked away to paint and shoot, paint and expose a little more each time by single frame.

The animated footage was rich and dense. It was indeed painting that moved! A number of visual artists were in the audience and speaking as a painter who has tested some of these painting/filming single frame methods I found it quite moving to witness the flow, the shifts, the changes. Ideas flooded the screen. An animated sequence would perform its particular metamorphosis and be displaced by some other theme. Collage appeared, mostly faces and bodies, these became overwhelmed by the substance of the paint. Three dimensional elements were abruptly there, strings and wires and plastic garbage rolling around and making a place for themselves. Then collage came back in more set up ways with a television screen hollowed to allow all kinds of jokey flowing movements, a tumble of bodies, bodies which protruded from the set itself into the crazy space of the viewers and a cut out face at first seen as screen viewer was suddenly in there within the space of television land. How fascinating that Mike Brown did all this work (twelve minutes is a lot of animation with primitive equipment) and stashed it away never to have had any public airing before the 11th July 1995!

Having provided their excellent Elmo dual gauge projector to show the Anni Mae Shone, Arthur and Corinne Cantrill also brought along some animation done by an artist friend of theirs in New York in the 1970s. It had been filmed within one studio space, repeating objects of a few simple objects and refilming to exploit the double exposure potential of the old 8mm cameras. Opaque and transparent elements interacted and overlapped creating forms and tonal gradations of great beauty. The Standard 8 projector also has the potential for graduated speed changes and this I suspect became a part of what we saw on the screen. Just as all of us super 8 enthusiasts are filled with dread at even the mention of film stocks coming to an end or our S8 equipment no longer repairable through lack of parts, so the single eight devotees must have mourned the demise of that format. In my cupboard (next to the 9.5 Pathe which is also unused) sits an exquisite standard 8 Bolex which is in mint condition as it was when an old friend presented it to me last year. The lens looks beautiful, film speeds range from 12fps through seven gradients up to 64 fps, it is a finely crafted compact machine and as well the multiple exposure possibilities are endless. Film can be obtained from England and America I am told.

Both Dirk de Bruyn and I brought along new films, super 8 films which explored methods introduced decades ago. My experiment was to use recycled footage and attack it physically with razor blades and multiple layerings of overhead projector pens for polychromatic staining. I got into a frightful mess with stain on everything and it all had to be processed with film cleaner and film lubricant, many times, before I felt confident to run it through my projector, attach its credits and give it a simple sound track. The result of this violent scratching and staining onslaught was quite sparkling abstract forms in quick succession.. I found that certain effects had been anticipated but this short film I called Feathered had many surprises for me when I first screened it!

Dirk de Bruyn's daring and lovely time lapse film was, of course, something which as a technique in general principal went back to early days of experimental film. Dirk has set up many cameras in different sites anticipating the wonder of shadow arcs throughout a contracted day. How much, I wondered, had he come to anticipate the magic of prisms and rainbows as the sun's angle hit the camera's lens? Was all of it serendipitous? I imagine a mixture of knowledge gained from experience and preparedness to take risks! Because Dirk's camera was set up in an open space, but one where there were mountains and trees to cast their shadows, and presumably he guessed at the most satisfying speeds for capturing shadow shift rhythms: we see amazing

natural cycles and stirrings. Abstract stuff yet totally locked into and dependent upon seasons and natural elements, primal visions, the stuff surely that Avebury and Stonehenge were all about.

There were a lot of films on that night. I have chosen to write just about Mike Brown's Anni Mae Shone section of the evening and some selected works which tied into the historical theme. I am confident there will be other opinions contributing to the newsletter with divergent viewpoints.

LAST OPEN SCREENING FILMS

(Tuesday 11th July, 1995 - Erwin Rado Theatre, 211 Johnston Street, Fitzroy)

AT 7:30 - Films by Mike Brown

SLIDE PRESENTATION - 30 slides of paintings.

ANNIE MAY SHONE (1973, colour, 12mins Standard8)

27 ALEX (1986, colour, S8 by M.Brown/Darryl Tilson)

OPEN SCREENING FILMS

Inside/Outside '95 - Tony Woods (13:20mins)

OK E.K.'95 - Peter Lane (6 mins)

The Trade's Assitant - Irene Proebsting (2 mins)

Industrial Vesper #4 - Barry Brown (2.5 mins)

Carnivorous Glass - Jennifer Leggett (7 mins)

Loft Life - L.Horowitz (slomo 4fps)

Feathered - Maeve Woods (2 mins)

24fpssilent - Dirk de Bruyn (15 mins)

The Drifter - Raymond Gemmel (7 mins)

Rather Flushed - Jeffrey Norris (5 mins)

Walk down Swanston Street - R & S Bourke (5mins)

NEXT OPEN SCREENING Films by Nickolas & Daniell Flood.

7.30pm, Tuesday 8th August,
ERWIN RADO THEATRE, 211 Johnston St,
Fitzroy. (see article inside)

followed by an Open Screening
BYO films!

Free Entry (Donations Accepted)

COMING EVENTS

August 8th - Open Screening

September 8th, 9th, 10th

SUPER KIOSK 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 June issue of the newsletter for further info, or call Tim or Steven at the Group.

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Editorial and Layout by Matthew Rees

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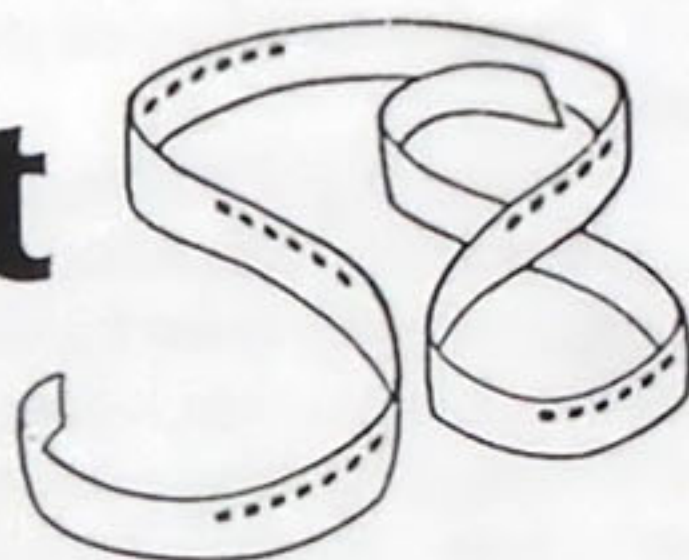
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