

Issue 117 September 1996

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Hobby

On behalf of the committee, I would like to welcome Dianne Duncombe to the position of administrator.

Dianne has had a long involvement with film, theatre and music dating back to the 1970's when she was a member of The Women's Theatre group, promoter and band leader, and also toured in South East Asia with a thirteen piece music troupe.

In 1980 during her appointment as Arts Director for RMIT Union, Dianne together with Virginia Fraser set up workshops and promoted Super 8 film practice and also collaborated on film projects. (refer article S8 Newsletter Issue 106 Sept 1995)

Dianne has worked as a publicist, administrator and co-ordinator with various organisations and brings a diverse range of skills to the Group. Irene Proebsting

FROM THE SUPER 8 OFFICE

DIANNE DUNCOMBE - NEW ADMINISTRATOR

I'm settling into the Administrators position and looking forward to a productive relationship with the membership. I do welcome constructive ideas, suggestions and practical input and hope that members will contribute actively to the group wherever possible.

1997 FUNDING

The Super 8 Committee with some film group members have worked hard on the application for 1997 funding from the Australian Film Commission. This is a grinding and time consuming task and many thanks need to go to all members who have contributed to this work.

CURRENT OFFICE HOURS

Monday 12 -1 pm Barry
Tuesday 2 -5 pm Tony
Wednesday 11 - 5 Dianne
Thursday 1-2 pm Tony
Friday 3.15 - 5.15 pm Dianne

Thanks to Tony and Barry for contributing some regular time to the office and to Irene for co-ordinating this months newsletter.

HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE?

MEMBERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE FOLLOWING TASKS:

1. To fill regular office shifts by answering phone and other inquiries, equipment hire and return and keeping the office active and functional. One hour each from several members at a regular weekly time would go a long way towards making the office more representative of and responsive to members needs and also give the film group a better public profile. I will assist members to become familiar with the office should you wish to donate some administrative time.
2. To assist with clean - ups after the monthly screenings. If a few members will help, this task will not take very long. Currently the member who sets up the screenings also cleans up and this doesn't seem fair.
3. To host a How - To - Do super 8 equipment workshop for members and new equipment users. Members who are proficient in equipment use are needed to assist in the organisation of a hands on workshop for those those who would like to start using the super 8 equipment the group currently hires. This would also generate some much needed funds for the group as well as providing an interesting, useful activity for existing and prospective members.
4. To assist with the Naked 8 Festival that screens in October.
5. To set - up and service a Super 8 database that details items such as:

THE 9TH MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL – **NAKED 8** – IS ALMOST UPON US!

And it is looking very promising. Our first overseas entry has arrived from Toronto – John Kneller's **Drop In/Shoot/Drop Out**. (Michael Hoolboom, our Toronto member, has arranged this for us.) The film is a dense and complex multi-image work, rephotographed from Kneller's earlier films. We are negotiating with John Kneller to send a second film for NAKED 8.

There's more from Canada: Gallery 101 in Ottawa, which has an active film program, has recently held its Super 8 Film Festival, and the Director, Timothy Dallett, is sending a selection of 5 or 6 films from that to NAKED 8. The Ottawa festival was unusual in that it called for proposals for films which the gallery then funded, so it showed a smaller group of films at the festival, running them several times at the gallery. We hope that next year the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group will send a program of work to Gallery 101.

Our friends in San Francisco, SILT, whose film **Kuch'nai** we showed at Super Kiosk 8, are sending us two new films for NAKED 8.

A feature of NAKED 8 will be the tribute to Richard and Pat Larter who have made a formidable body of Super 8 films from the 1960s into the 1980s. Their films have not previously been shown in Melbourne – their film work is known much more in Sydney. Richard Larter is a distinguished artist who won the Clemenger Art Prize earlier this year – his paintings and films share similar aesthetic approaches. Niagara Galleries which represents Richard Larter will be publicising the NAKED 8 screenings to the large number of people on its mailing list, through its quarterly newsletter. This program should bring in a wider audience to the Festival.

naked8

Entry Deadline for Films
Tuesday September 10th

Erin McCuskey from the Ballarat Super 8 Group reports that several films from that group will be coming for the Festival. We look forward to this productive new relationship with the Ballarat filmmakers, as well as with other filmmakers around Australia.

Meanwhile, back in Melbourne, local filmmakers are all finishing the usual amazing group of films for the Festival, which are due in on September 10. NAKED 8 is an opportunity to show our work at the State Film Theatre with its high-powered projection, in the city. The Melbourne Cinémathèque is generously underwriting the hire of the theatre – another collaborative venture between Melbourne film-oriented groups.

It is very difficult for the Melbourne Super 8 Film group to run this year's festival without funding from the AFC, but if all members work hard to make it a success, it should be a very impressive event!

The NAKED 8 Festival takes place on Thursday, October 24th, Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th at the State Film Theatre.

Corinne Cantrill
Festival Committee Member

Benefit Screening a Huge Success

Thanks to Auther and Corinne Cantrill for hosting a wonderful night of eclectic films from their collection. Thanks also to Projectionist, Ross Campbell. The much-needed funds raised will go towards the Naked8 Festival.

An August Open Screening?

There is an opinion often expressed, particularly during committee meetings, that there should be nothing published in the newsletter that could be deemed as being 'harmful' to a perception of the group. The ostensible rationalisation is that anything critical is negative and that is bad. But too many kind words and cosy backpatting breeds complacency and the absence of anything more than promotional positivism puts the lid on the potential for this newsletter to act as a conduit for some healthy debate. The following review of the August Open Screening assumes that the reader wants more than a simple acknowledgment or record of the screening of a number of films in one place at one time. It assumes that the reader is capable of recognising criticism as a catalyst for debate rather than an excuse to negate; as a springboard for some analysis, with the reader as a living, breathing, thinking individual capable of forming their own opinions and contributing to an ongoing healthy exchange of ideas. This review presumes to represent nothing more than the opinion of its writer and assumes that the criticisms contained herein will be taken by the reader as being written, in good faith, to identify some concerns that the writer has and is curious as to whether these concerns are shared by any of the readers.

The August Open Screening started with a film by the Cantrills, **Petunias**. This was a colourful and sumptuous single frame visual study of the eponymous flowers with a truly dramatic soundtrack that fizzed and buzzed with an amazing spatial dynamic, stereoscopically speaking. The use of the single frame was determined, as Corinne helpfully informed us, by the malfunctioning camera being stuck on that particular setting. A couple of films later we saw Tony Woods' millionth film **H2O**. This was a deep study of a particular phenomenon of some particular water, observed and duly shot and recorded as is Tony's wont, becoming a solid block of evidence of his filmmaking prowess. Then we saw Moira Joseph's **Brian's Body**. This consisted mainly of Super 8 and re-shot black and white photos of bits of some bloke's (Brian I presume) naked body with a fake fly flitting around, all framed by some neo-narrative shots of him in bed, a fan and the bed emptied. This was accompanied by some ambient music-by-numbers with the sound of a buzzing fly.

If my reporting of these three films seems somewhat matter of fact, then perhaps this is not altogether unintentional. As accomplished and entirely located in each of the filmmakers oeuvres as these films are, I cannot help thinking that they are part of a continuing project (common to many filmmakers in the group) of taking a single idea (often a visual phenomenon) and exploring it, turning it inside out and upside down, as far as it will go. Such single minded vigorousness is admirable but it often seems ultimately inconsequential, any

spark of surprise, revelation or revolution exhausted through multiple versions of the same process. These films can hardly claim to be 'experimental', (experimenting with what?) and they follow a path well-trodden in the history of experimental filmmaking. At best they are exploring areas of visual beauty and surfaces, and therein lies a rather bourgeois notion of aesthetics.

In the middle of the above group sat **E.21** by Ian Poppins'. The title immediately sparked my imagination, some new Ecstasy synthesis drug, a hitherto undiscovered area of the east end of London? Alas no. This was a film about a seat that Ian always occupies when at the footy. I'm sorry but at this realisation the film lost me. I have never been able to understand the appeal of competitive spectator sports and this was another of Ian's documentary style home movies. Not a patch on the brilliant **Puffing Billy** I'm afraid. As footy films goes **E.21** is up against some stiff competition. Nothing can touch Jennifer Pignataro's **Wild Day** of some years back which evokes a sense of wonderment and occasion at the footy experience far more magical than the habitual mundanity of sitting in the same seat week in, week out for the last four hundred years.

Two other films that lost me, in different ways were Peter Lane's **Vacation Vignette** and James Thompson's **Lazy Sunday**. Both were unpretentious and made with an enthusiasm that is unquenchable. Peter has made more interesting films so this one is really just another notch on the camera grip for him. James's film was interesting mainly because James is interesting. He will readily admit that he hasn't got a clue what he's doing but figures that if everyone else can make a film, then so can he. An attitude I heartily endorse. He announced that he had intended to use another soundtrack but had then decided to use a piece of music that he had just managed to get hold of after a long search. That piece of music was Malcolm MacLaren's **Buffalo Gals**. The music's complete inappropriateness to the film gave it a poignancy that could never have been contrived. James's slackness is inspirational.

If I can return to the Cantrills/Woods/Joseph trio of films mentioned earlier. I suppose my problem with these films is that they are all, regardless of quality, more of the same, both from those filmmakers and as a tracing of a trend. What I find lacking is an invigoration of this trend, a progression towards other understandings of the relationship between practice and context. Currently it seems to be more a case of maintaining the status quo than raising the stakes. The question is what can we learn from these practices and how can we apply them to the world afresh? Is it enough to simply say that an activity continues with determination to justify its existence, or should that activity also be engaging with the conditions of its existence. Perhaps I'm getting old and impatient and after all I haven't made a new Super 8 film for nearly a year.

Perhaps the appearance of someone else who hasn't made a film for a while, with a new film at the Open Screening that really *did* raise the stakes as far

Perry's GOLDEN MOMENTS OF MOVIE MAGIC

Would be Star of Tomorrow Award goes to Sarah-Jessica Buntingdale-Smythby-Hornbag-Fotheringham, 22, student, for her film about friends and fashion at uni. "Fits of the Giggles" recently screened here and in Cannes, and has been bought and distributed by "some weally big names for such a tiny film," according to the film's producer, Amanda Huntingale-Manor.

TRAINSPOTTING

After seeing Pulp Fiction and Trainspotting, Sarah-Jessica decided she was as 'cool' as that and asked mum & dad to put up the \$50,000 needed for film stock and retro clothing. Sarah-Jessica and company struggled, (read: giggled) their way through the shoot and various nightclubs until - oh my god! - the cash ran out.

BAD TRIP

It was Sarah-Jessica's boss at work who spotted her crying into her drink and came to the rescue, put up enough cash to finish the film and encourage her to enter it in a film festival. But this fairytale (or is it just a bad trip?) was far from over. After being screened at a prestigious Festival, the audience broke into what seemed, rapturous applause. (The audience were actually bored shitless, slapping themselves trying to stay awake)



FESTIVAL HIT

Slumbering, snoring critics were abruptly awoken by the thunderous noise and looked around bewildered at the commotion going on around them. They quickly huddled together to compare notes and to their collective horror realised they'd ALL missed the entire film, (due to a heavy and hearty complimentary lunch) and that even though they'd not seen it, 'Fits of the Giggles,' MUST be the hit of the festival. Immediately they started to fall over themselves gushing praise about the film, ensuring its local success. Hmmm.

TARANTINO

Consequently, the CFC gave Sarah-Jessica a \$1,550,000 grant in appreciation for not pestering them for a grant. Next Sarah-Jessica was being flown to Cannes for the film's premiere and to do lunch with Hoges and Linda, Tarantino and Marty. And again at the film's screening, those rumped, rotund critics fell asleep after all that rich French food and again they awoke to thunderous apple sauce. Damn! Sarah-Jessica was awarded a whatever and was last seen boarding a plane bound for L.A. with Hal & Jim, once her uni idols and now (gasp!) her contemporaries, discussing a new film project. Hmmm.... (Giggle, giggle, giggle.)

as I'm concerned, colours my perception of the entire screening. With **Tawdry Sass** Maeve Woods takes the obsession with scratching and colouring film that she discovered in **Feathered** much, much further. Maeve is not content to let the film rest at being a spectacularly colourful and itchy scratched visual experience. She accompanies it with a soundtrack of a poetic text read by an Italian friend. The woman's voice, her slightly indecipherable accent, the almost songlike cadence, gives the text a kind of Joycean quality. The text refers to the scratching of the film and the notion of scratchings, incisions (from what I could make out, and I'd like to hear/see it again... and read the text), which weaves with the images into an astounding resonance. The to-ing and fro-ing between the two elements becomes commentary and counter commentary, rebounding with both playfully comic 'sass' and keen elegance. With its poetic combination of text and materialism **Tawdry Sass** is like a hybrid of **Light Reading** by Lis Rhodes and some of Marcus Bergner's most interesting work (this comparison is intended to be great praise!).

That's it.

Steven Ball

Super 8 Equipment Hire 1995

Equipment	Description	per day	per week (7 days)
Sankyo Sound Camera XL-620 Supertronic	6x Zoom, Lap dissolve, single-frame, slomo, 18 or 24 fps. With mic.	\$10.00	\$40.00
Canon Silent Camera 1014	10x Zoom, Lap dissolve, slomo, 18 or 24 fps.	\$10.00	\$40.00
Editor / Viewers	Various.	\$1.00	\$5.00
Wurker Splicers	Good, reliable and easy to use.	\$2.00	\$10.00
Splices to suit above	Available for purchase. Only covers 1 frame either side of cut, leaves both stripes free.	\$10 per pack (50)	
Miller Tripod Junior	Fluid head.	\$2.00	\$10.00
Elmo ST-180 Projector	Sound, Twin track. VR level monitor for track laying	\$10.00	\$40.00
Eumig Mark S projector	Sound (optical or magnetic)	\$10.00	\$40.00
Fujica Frame Enlarger	For taking still photos from Super 8 and 16mm frames.	\$2.00	\$10.00
Sony Telecine Adaptor	For transferring film to video. Requires Projector & Video Camera. Can be used to copy film-to-film.	\$3.00	\$15.00
Super 8 backwinder	For backwinding film to make double exposures.	\$2.00	\$10.00
Tascam 4 Track Recorder	Sound deck for recording soundtracks	\$2.00	\$10.00
Stand-alone Screen	For use with projector	\$1.00	\$5.00

(All prices members only. Non-members rates differ.)
for bookings/enquiries, phone (03) 9417-3402

Reels of Perception

The Ballarat Super 8 Film Group comprised the work of six filmmakers who like us, look at reality as is, or rearranged, through a circle eye piece on to a rectangle frame, seek immediate perception, conceptual analysis and imaginatively select and exclude framed areas that once in clear focus are triggered at various F.P.S in 3 min 20 s reels of film.

The Ballarat Filmmakers travelled the long distance to the Erwin Rado Theatre with their selected programme for the August 13 open screening: the films on two reels, seven films to be projected at 24 F.P.S, two at 18 F.P.S. The projection speed of 24 F.P.S (obviously shot at 24 F.P.S) surprised me (but not the projectionist) - as most of our films at our monthly screenings are shown at 18 F.P.S. First we had a sound piece by local Steven Ball. Followed By:

Vinyl Demise, Dona Pentland
Good and Evil, Brendan T. Murray
Stairways to Heaven, Group Production
Heartbeat, Train Boy, Tim Block
Distractions, Erin McCusky
The Blue Teapot, Verity Higgins
From the Sole, Suddenly seeing the light,
Melissa O'Garey

I personally enjoyed " From the Sole" and " Suddenly seeing the Light". I have little difficulty remembering sections of most of the programme which I considered a worthwhile one, I hope to see several Ballarat films included in our October "Naked 8" festival here in Melbourne.

I wonder with all this activity in Super 8, with ever so many practitioners that makes Victoria the centre for this gauge in Australia, where the credit for all this activity lies?

The Ballarat short films on the whole displayed a keen sense of humour, acute observation, with the appearance of the group in each others films and the utilisation of locals as leads and extras shows a community involvement in the Groups activities, and local support from business and availability of local organisation facilities in the area.

It was indeed unfortunate that several minor cuing problems marred the debut of our new amplifier and borrowed cassette deck. Despite the delays the reaction of the over 40 people in rapt attention to

the enlarged projection of such a small medium was warm and enthusiastic the humour was much appreciated on a cold night.

I am not sure which of the soundtracks were original, who did what or who played, all were well recorded.

I applaud the apparent hunger for celluloid from the group. Congratulations to all concerned. Incidentally all are now members of the MS8FG. They are also planning a future curated show of MS8FG films in Ballarat.

The group showed initiative in initially contacting Corinne Cantrill to see if she would view their planned programme for a later inclusion in a larger Ballarat Arts Festival. Corinne agreed to look at the films in Melbourne enlisting the aid of Barry brown and Steven Ball, they judged that a film by Erin McCusky be awarded the \$1500 for equipment to be awarded during the later festival, the winner promptly shared the proceeds with the members of the group.

The 13th August proved not to be an unlucky night, the projected films of both Groups showed the individualism, the serialisation of the fragment to remind the viewer that the mind has a life of its own. That this can be visualised using it as the basis for serious, humorous, interesting works of visualisation.

Tony Woods

Short films have long been part of the Australian filmmaking tradition. Think of war-time newsreels. Since then, shorts have been made for years by organisations such as the Melbourne Super Eight Film Group and the Sydney Intermedia Network, whose late-night gigs at the Paddington Town Hall in the eighties were a precursor to Tropfest. And Australian shorts have long had a strong reputation at overseas film festivals. But the difficulty for short films has been reaching a local audience. It's no surprise that the increasing popularity of short film events coincides with the growing buzz around Australian film in general.

VOGUE australia July 96 w

As part of the Artist In Schools Project I spent several months working with Grade 6 students from Chadstone Park

17 SHORT FILMS ARTIST IN SCHOOLS PROJECT FILMMAKING WITH MOIRA JOSEPH

Primary School. Our aim was to make several experimental short films using a variety of techniques including animation, hand coloring, montage, hand processing and other special effects. The children had lots of wild and wonderful ideas and the 17 short films completed range in length from 28 seconds to 6 minutes. The students experienced all the excitement, agony and anxiety of waiting for films to be processed and returned from U.S.A as well as having to re-shoot a number of sequences due to a faulty film. We approached technical problems as positive experiences, making sure the re-shoots were even better than the originals.

All the students benefited greatly from the project and found the processes challenging and highly inspirational.

The 17 films in the program are all innovative and entertaining and hopefully, we will see more exciting films from the students in years to come.

The Artist In Schools Project was an extremely rewarding and unforgettable experience that I am proud to have been a part of.

Moira Joseph

17 Short Films will be shown at the next open screening 7.30pm Tuesday 10th September

Cont'd from page 2

Places to hire or buy equipment, current film stocks, processing, sound striping, film fairs, swop fairs, film festivals, answers to common film technical questions - anything to do with Super 8. Members with ideas for a database format, or information to contribute are needed now!

6. To write interesting and informative articles for the Super 8 Newsletter that deal with filmmaking in any form. Your thoughts and ideas on filmmaking are interesting, please get involved with your newsletter.

7. To be active in initiating and developing new projects, promoting the group, activating film discussion, working on the newsletter, joining up new members, etc. This group needs an active membership that encourages and helps each other to learn new skills. Everyone has difficulties doing a new activity for the first time. The Super 8 Film Group must try to nurture learning processes and develop a greater membership skills base for the group to have a positive and active future. Too few members are doing too much to keep the group afloat! Let's spread the load a little.

SOME OTHER IDEAS THAT MEMBERS SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER

Please give some feedback on the following:

Memberships really need to rise as costs of the newsletter and screenings are not being met by the current fee structure. In the short term the concession price could more easily be dropped in favor of a \$20.00 fee structure for all members without the group having to go through the administrative process to alter fee structures required by the rules affecting incorporated associations.

Non members should pay to attend monthly screenings, and perhaps they will then have some added incentive to join the group. Perhaps a nominal screenings fee should also be levied for members. At the least donations at screenings should be actively encouraged.

Tea and coffee need to be paid for at monthly screenings.

The office phone needs to be used with care as the bills have been too high.

Members can contact me at the office on Wednesday or Friday in person or phone 94173402 or drop me a note at PO Box 2033 Fitzroy MDC VIC 3065.

Dianne Duncombe

Administrator

Last Open Screening

7.30 Films of the Ballarat Super 8 Film Group

8.30 Open Screening

Petunias Corinne & Arthur Cantrill 4min
E.21 Ian Poppins 5min
H2o Tony Woods 18min
Brian's Body Moira Joseph 7 1/2 min
Vacation Vignette Peter Lane 5 3/4 min
Lazy Sunday James Thompson 4min
Tawdry Sass Maeve Woods

Next Open Screening

At the Erwin Rado Theatre
Tuesday 10th September
211 Johnston Street Fitzroy

7.00 pm Soundtracks by Chris Knowles

7.30 pm **17 Short Films by students from Chadstone Park Primary School** (see inside)

Followed by an Open Screening - byo films

Super Eight



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