

SUPER EIGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MELBOURNE SUPER-8 FILM GROUP NO. 12 MAR '87

FEB MEETING

At 7:30 p.m. there was an open discussion on the group's activities for the year, and Ian Kerr was elected the 8th member of the committee.

At 8:30 p.m. there were films screened. Here is a list of them:

- Pink Thing from Outer Space by John Hardy
- One Step Ahead by Peter Schuller
- Francois' Cat by John Jolley
- 101 Animations by Nicholas Elliot
- Feet of my Dreams by Damien Grant
- Untitled by Damien Grant
- The End of the World by Bill Mousoulis
- Mr. and Mrs. Tumbletum Take a Walk
by Heather Shimmen
- Tonight by Jo Hampton
- Gold Green Black by Jo Hampton
- Gumsmene by Ljubica Tomic
- Enthusiasm by Simon Cooper

(A quick note on how this section of the newsletter works: a list of the films is written down and then anyone who wants to discuss any - and as many - of the films is allocated space.)

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OPEN SCREENING by Anne-Marie Crawford

February saw the year get off to a good start for Melbourne Super-8. The Open Screening drew a record 70 people and was, I think, one of the best nights of film the group has had.

My favourite of the night was Jo Hampton's **Gold Green Black**, which had a baby's babbling voice accompanying refilmed, often quite obscure images, evoking a warm, sensuous internal world of vague reminiscences.

Another interesting film was Ljubica Tomic's **Gumsmene**, in which video images of two bands in performance are refilmed through a semi-fisheye lens, distorting the image and enhancing its 'electronic' texture. There is an elusiveness about the images - they are mysterious fragments of an already obscure 'underground' activity. The film is accompanied by live recordings of the bands' 'industrial' music.

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SOME THOUGHTS ON SOME FILMS by Bill Mousoulis

The first Open Screening of the year on February 10 reminded us once again of that familiar schism of Super-8's: whilst some film-makers in the scene make progressively suggestive, abstracted narrative films, there are others - just starting out - who find their cinematic pleasure in the playful mimicry of certain well-known cinematic codes and forms. I think of Peter Schuller's **One Step Ahead** and John Jolley's **Francois' Cat**: familiar film-student-like product, thoroughly uninventive, thoroughly selfless.

But don't get me wrong; I'm not devaluing homage or imitation, just suggesting that film-makers (especially these younger ones) base their films on their own ideas/forms, and then bring in other, known, things. Otherwise they (in their careers) will always be one step behind (not ahead, as Peter Schuller's title proclaims.) Damien Grant, an associate of Peter Schuller's, seems to realize this. His film **Feet of my Dreams**, despite an obtrusive formal element (made even more so by it introducing *Dire Straits*), is a pleasing exercise with an ending that is absurd, funny, and touching.

The Open Screening then witnessed a couple of films of the avant-garde impulse: Jo Hampton's **Gold Green Black** and Ljubica Tomic's **Gumsmene**. It seems to me that even these films are sadly symptomatic of a conventionalization process. The other film-makers have their movie soundtrack lift-offs, these film-makers have their blurred images and original noise-type soundtracks - and no-one has the trace of individual pluck.

Well, almost no-one. At least Nicholas Elliot's animated pop-clip (to the wonderful *Tom Tom Club*) is a straight-forward, well-made piece. And Simon Cooper's **Enthusiasm** is, if nothing else, an interesting failure (Simon seems to specialize in them!) It's a film that is readily informed by cultural and social histories, but the acting in it is so bad that it harms the film, and cruelly robs it of any conviction.

1987 MAGAZINE

Is on sale NOW for \$2.00

And is available from the Open-Screenings, the RMIT shop, or by mail to P.O. Box 1150, RICHMOND NORTH for \$2.50.

Read articles by Bill Mousoulis, Anne-Marie Crawford. Interviews with the Marine Biologists and Paul Cox. Plus much more. Support Super 8, support the group for only \$2.00.



Foreign Correspondence: The International Super Eight Phenomenon

This magazine, published in Boston in 1986, contains articles by film-makers from the Phillipines, Latin America, Canada, Algeria, Australia, USA, and Puerto Rico. It is available by mail from: ACE EDIT, P.O. Box 323, Bondi Junction, NSW, 2022. Cost: \$4.00 (incl. postage.)

Cont.

And that is the main beef of this short article of mine: most Super-8 films I see just aren't "real". The suspicion that these film-makers are only "playing at" real film-making is ever-lurking and completely justified. Ron Olthof's *Something to Hide* (scheduled for the Open Screening but postponed until the upcoming one) is one film that is definitely "real" (i.e. it would've turned out pretty much the same whatever the gauge.) It's a combination of *Vertigo* and *Blow-Up* - i.e. that cinema of fascination - and has a coolness and an amorality about it that is astonishing. Its maker even plays the lead role - I'm still trying to figure out how he pulled it all off.

So far I have talked of three qualities I believe to be essential to a good film-maker: realness, unconventionalism, and individuality. None of the above film-makers have all three traits. Maybe my demands are too much. Still...

I am interested in a cinema of the impossible, a cinema of the future: a cinema of metaphor, desire, dream, play. I hope for, every time I see a film, a wild style or a new form (it is form, and form alone, that determines 'content' and 'meaning'.) And I have seen my dream, in Super-8. I have seen it in, for example, the work of that trio of women film-makers Jane Stevenson, Virginia Hilyard, and Anne-Marie Crawford; a trio disconnected by time and place, but connected by the element of dream (dream-likeness, dreaming, dreamy) common in all their films.

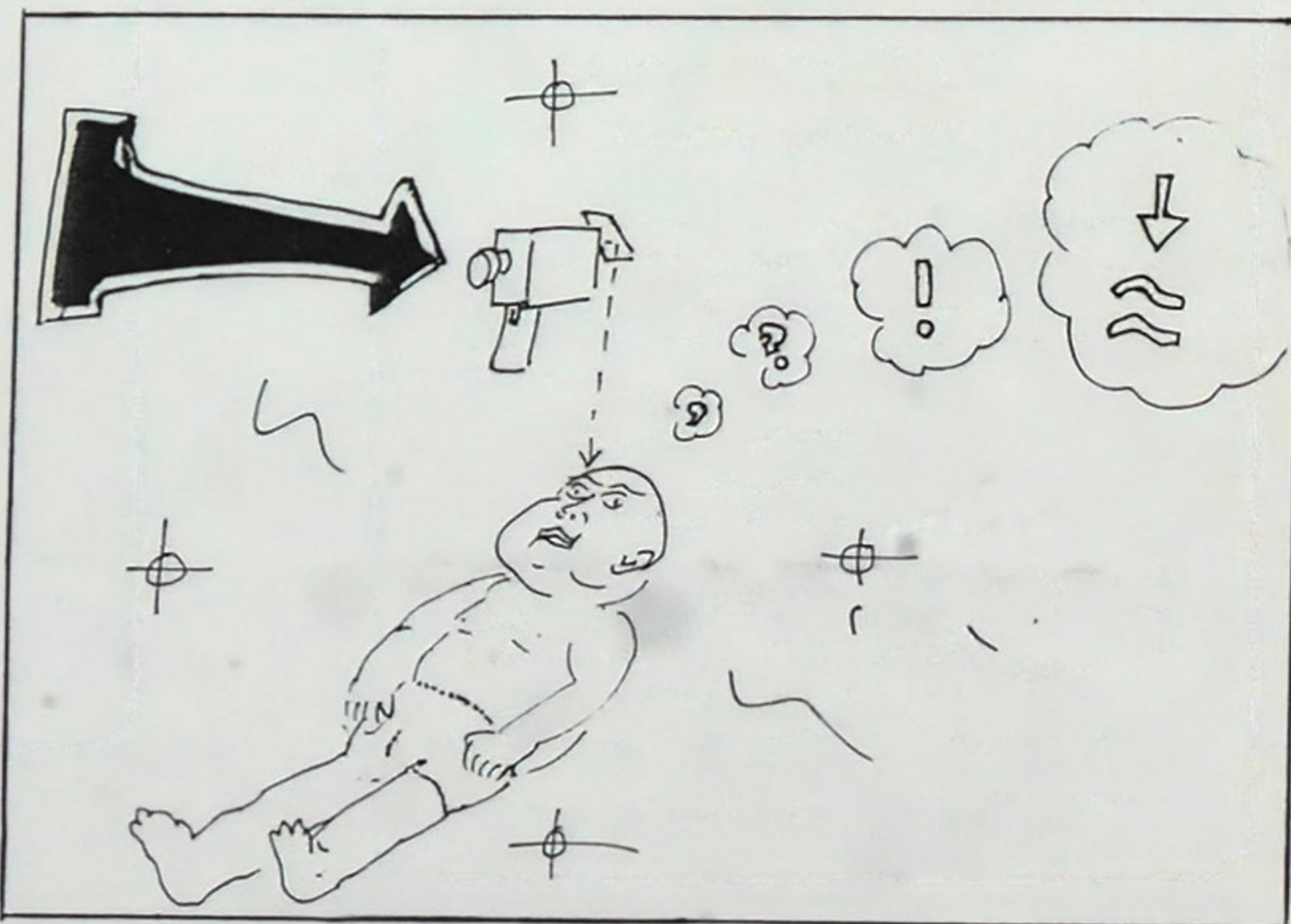
And so whilst film-makers like Jo Hampton, Ljubica Tomic, Nick Elliot, and Ron Olthof make films that are above average and quite interesting, one has to, and I do, hope for another kind of cinema - a Utopian, visionary one.

After all, we have to go places...

SOME THOUGHTS ON The End of the World

Purporting, perhaps, to be a mood film (there is atmosphere, but no mood), this film leaves me indifferent, feeling nothing. All I see are just shots; a shot of this, a shot of that, a shot of this. What's more, the notion of the everyday is brought up only to be used as part of a cute joke, rather than considered and re-furbished itself.

Ian Kerr



SUPER 8 NEWS

T.V.U. - Television Unlimited.

"T.V.U. is your T.V."

T.V.U. is broadcasting its "WINDOWS" programme on S.B.S. TV. The first hour is on Sun, March 1st at 1.00 p.m., repeated Wed. 4th at 11.00 p.m. The second hour will be broadcast on Sunday March 29th at 1.00 p.m., and repeated on Wednesday April 1st at 11.00 p.m. The second hour has three Super 8 films; Mehmet Raif's "The Midnight Train to Katmandu", Nick Donkin's "Only You" and Ian Kerr's "Animation Generation". There are further programmes planned and we'll fill you in on their times and dates closer to the dates. T.V.U. is very enthusiastic towards super 8 and needs your support. If you would like more info contact Sarah Johnson. 534 4344.

Video Compilations

The Melbourne Super 8 Group will be compiling several videotapes of super 8 work throughout the year. They will be rough transfers, on low band VHS. The tapes will be available only to super 8 Group members and for reference purposes. The first batch of films will be transferred very soon. All films are welcome. So bring films along and hand them to Ron Olthof or Matthew Rees at the next open screening on March 10. Please label films carefully.

MELBOURNE FILM FESTIVAL

... Is coming up - Bill Mousoulis, Sarah Johnson, Jo Hampton & Chris Windmill are looking for films. We need them soon, so please contact us for further information. Ring Sarah, Bill, or Jo - 598 7064, or Chris - 531 2779.

Melbourne
8mm Movie Club Inc.
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IN PRODUCTION

On the Sunday before last (22nd Feb), after a tense and protracted period of preproduction, filming finally got under way on the long awaited epic, Walled City. Based on the classic science-fiction short story of the same name, which hasn't entertained generation after generation of readers for centuries on end (because it was only written a few years ago, and isn't even published yet), this Super 8 blockbuster attraction already has attracted frenzied attention from the media even before shooting is completed (well, we're writing about it aren't we?).

Pandemonium was reported on the set on the first day of shooting when the lead actress missed her 1:00pm make-up call and was still nowhere to be found at 2:15, a quarter of an hour after shooting was scheduled to begin. Eyewitnesses claimed that the director went into a rage, hurling props and some of the extras at a nearby brick wall. When the actress finally turned up at 2:30, the following heated exchange took place:

Director: Ready to start?

Actress: Yes, I'm ready.

Director: Okay, let's go.

Another reason for the keen interest in this production is the director behind the project: Kiwi "enfant terrible", John Calder. In his few short years at the top, this "wunderkind" has established a reputation for a fascinating visual flair, and Walled City is no exception. On the first day of shooting alone, Calder developed an innovative and visually breathtaking special effect which he called "handholding the camera". Furthermore, Calder is employing a radical new shooting technique relying on extremely long takes, in which the camera isn't even turned off while the roll of film is changed!

But what has drawn the most public interest is the rumour of a shocking and stunning scene of debauchery, where a crowd of extras virtually tear each other to shreds on camera as they fight for pieces of fruit. On hearing of this, several prominent citizens and moral guardians demanded to see the first day's rushes. A visibly stunned and deeply shocked Fred Nile said: "It all looks pretty tame to me."

In an effort to place it all in some sort of perspective we approached prominent Melbourne Super 8 filmmaker/theorist/guru Bill Mousoulis for his views on the controversy. "I make films intuitively," Bill said. Well, I think that just about sums it all up; what more can you say?

PEN-PRICK



SYDNEY/WEST GERMAN SUPER-8 - February 12,13.

Venue: Glasshouse
360 Swanston St. Melbourne.

These were excellent programs of Super-8 which were unfortunately only attended by about 80 - 100 people over the two nights.

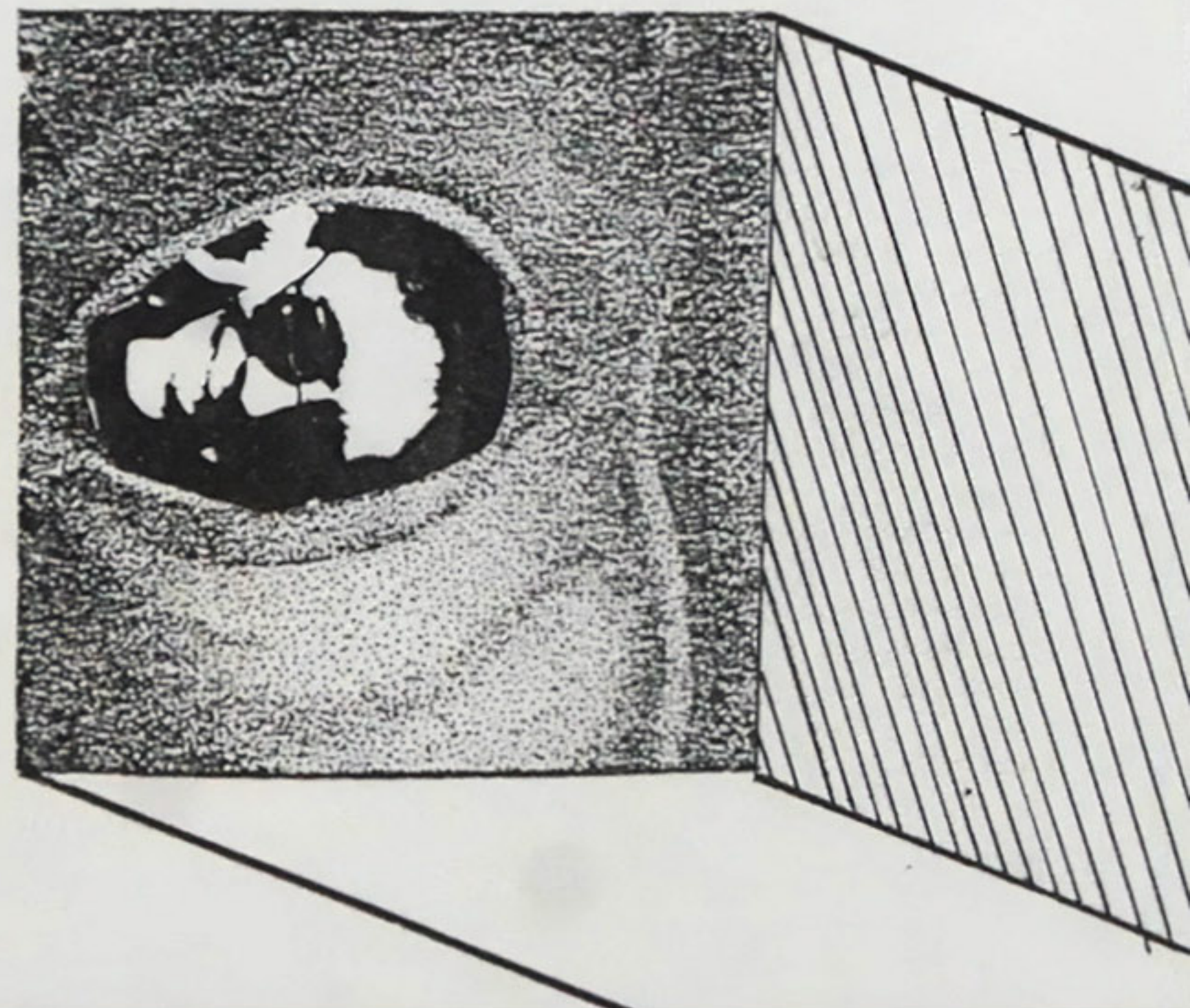
The West German films were generally slicker Super-8 films than we usually see in this country, which must bear some relation to the more sophisticated exhibition networks for Super-8 in West Germany. According to the program notes, Super-8 films are regularly screened at a number of cinemas and shown on television to enthusiastic audiences.

There was also mention of a Super-8 feature film commissioned by a TV station. My favourites of this program were Udo Penner's B.E.C., an exquisitely photographed black and white film noir piece, and Urlaubsclip Africa by Christoph Doring, another visually stunning film which celebrated the rhythms and colour of that continent.

The Sydney program contained highlights of the Seventh Sydney Super-8 Film Festival which, for the first time in a few years, did not make it down to Melbourne. To compare the programs, it might be noticed that the West German films tended to draw more on a general film culture than the Sydney films which, (as has been commented upon previously*), seem to be a bit more influenced by other art practices.

- Anne-Marie Crawford

* M. Titmarsh "The Rise of Super-8 in Australia", Foreign Correspondence: The International Super-8 Phenomenon, 1986, The International Centre for 8mm. Film and Video Inc. Boston, USA.



Next Meeting

NEXT MEETING.

The next open screening will be on
Tuesday the 10th of March.

Venue; Glasshouse Meeting Room, R.M.I.T.
360 Swanson St, Melbourne.

At 7.30 p.m. Ron Olthof will be dis-
cussing how to do photo blowups from
your super 8 films.

At 8.30 p.m. Super 8 films
including Ron Olthof's promised "Something
To Hide", and possibilities of new films
from Bill Mousoulis and Anne-Marie Crawford.
B.V.O. films as well.



1987 PREVIEW SCREENINGS

In 1987 MIMA is planning informal
preview screenings on a regular
basis, at the A.F.I. Theatre, ground floor,
47 Little La Trobe Street, Melbourne.

- * NEW WORKS
- * OLD WORKS
- * WORK IN PROGRESS

These are open to all artists &
film/videomakers who wish to show
their work. Just bring Super 8,
16mm or tapes (1/2" or 3/4").

6.00 p.m. Wednesday March 11

MIMA. Telephone:- (03) 663 1953

CONTACT NUMBERS FOR THE GROUP

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RESOURCE POOL

Equipment (Bill)
Crew (Bill)
Actors (Matthew)
General (Sarah)

This newsletter is published monthly by the Melbourne Super-8 Film Group

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Membership to the Super-8 Group is \$10 per 12 months.

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SUPER EIGHT

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