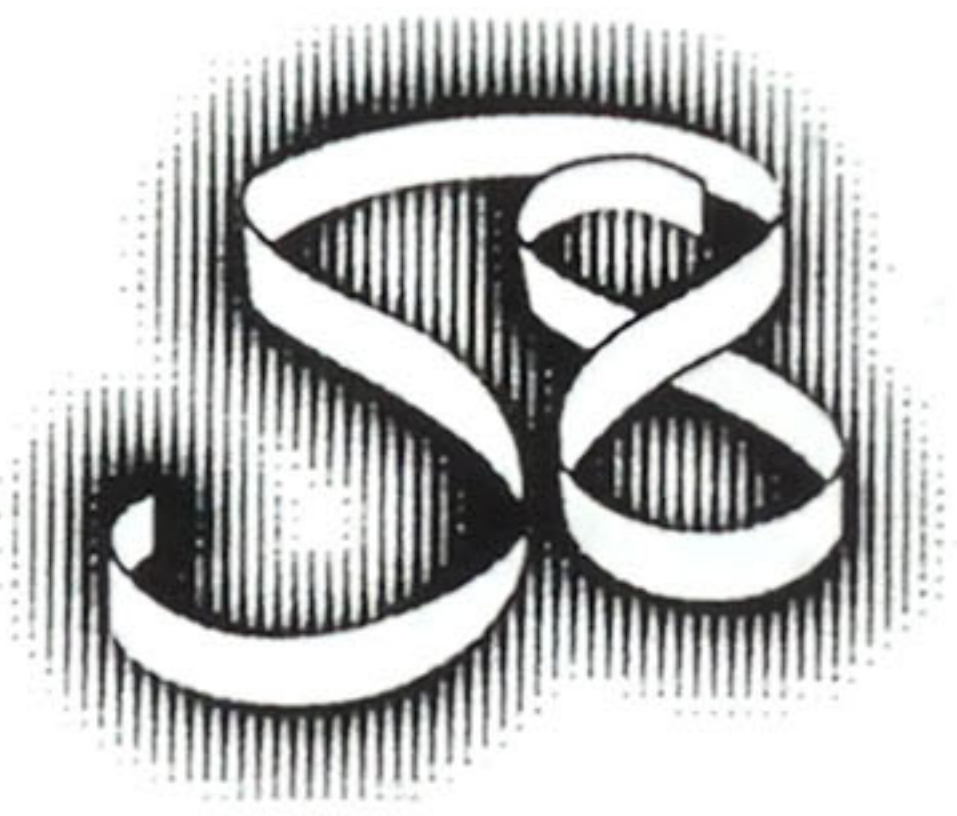


# Super Eight



*Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc.*  
ISSUE 120 December 1996



\*\*\* FROM THE OFFICE \*\*\*

### AFC Funding Result

The MS8FG has received funding from the AFC for a further 12 months. Well done to the members who worked so hard on the submission.

### AGM

Members please remember the Annual General Meeting on December 10th at 7.30pm. This will be followed by the open screening and refreshments.

### Compound Eye

The MS8FG screening in early November as part of the experimenta Short, Sharp and Very Current programme was well attended and received. Tony Woods curated a programme that was entertaining, interesting and representational of the great things filmmakers can do with super 8.

Originally experimenta invited the MS8FG to include the Naked 8 Film Festival as a part of the Short, Sharp and Very Current programme but the MS8FG decided to produce the festival under its own banner.

At a much later date Tony Woods approached experimenta about curating a group screening. The experimenta budget had been allocated by this time and this is the only reason that MS8FG members were not paid for their films. The MS8FG Committee passed the motion to hold the screening at the October meeting.

The Super 8 Film Group does need some regular exposure in multi-media events if only to showcase super 8 film's many possibilities to new audiences. Compound Eye was an exhilarating celebration of the abilities of Super 8 as a medium for fabulous in-camera effects, great colour, original ideas and filmmaking affordability.

I for one was happy to donate my film and time to setting up a professional screening of the groups work and I'm sure that credit for the event clearly falls to the MS8FG.

It was interesting to note however that much of the film component in the experimenta programme was super 8 film, especially after reading the experimenta Program Director Shiralee Saul article in the 3RRR magazine.



Super 8 does have the ability to do many things that new technologies find difficult. There will always be the responsibility to broaden public perception that new technologies are not necessarily always better, currently available or even affordable. Many new technology claims are still in the realm of pure fantasy. This group can play an active role in the changing face of technology debate by clearly stating over and over again the case for super 8 filmmaking.

### Festivals - Entries Wanted

The 7th annual Melbourne Queer Film and Video Festival will screen from 14th to 30th March 1997 and is calling for entries on VHS preview cassette to be received by January the 17th 1997. Entries should have some relationship to gay issues or be made by lesbian or gay filmmakers. Entry forms are available from the MS8FG office or phone 6139 510 5576 or fax 6139 510 5699 for details.

Entry forms are also available for the Enigma 8 Film Competition or phone the Ballarat Super 8 Film Group on 053 317749 or 053 331645. The closing date for entries is the 19th of January 1997.

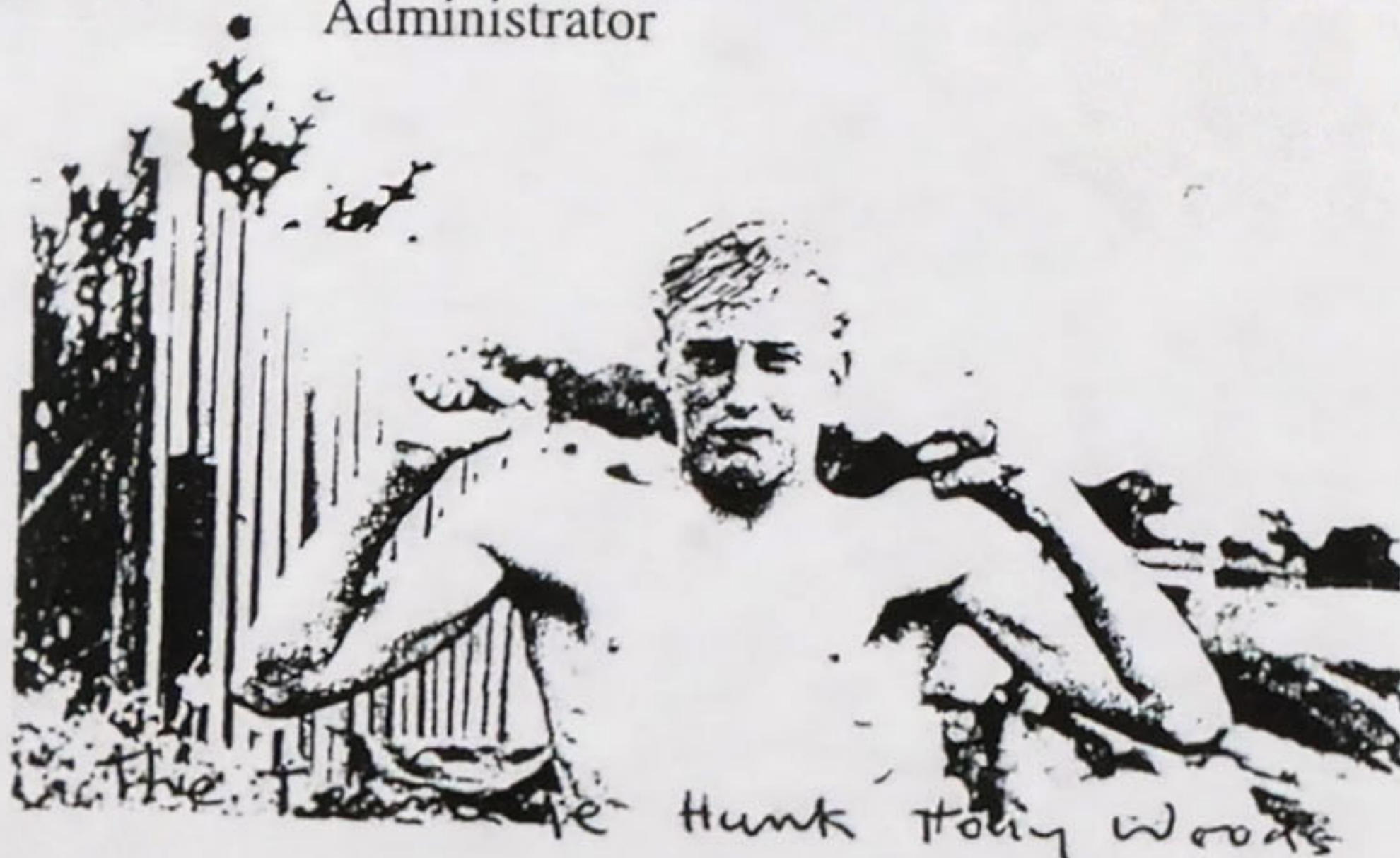
### Film Awards

Congratulations to MS8FG member Moira Joseph and Chadstone Park Primary School for winning Best Primary Film with **Gourmet Lunch** and a commendation with **Lets Eat** in the 1996 Panasonic Australian Student Film/Video Awards organised by ATOM. These and other films screened at the MS8FG Open Screening in September this year.

### Eat Carpet

The Moira Joseph 3 min film **The Things I Can Do With My Toes** was shown on the SBS program Eat Carpet last Saturday 23rd November.

Dianne Duncombe  
Administrator



**Notice of Annual General Meeting**

**Tuesday 10th December 1996,  
7:30pm sharp,  
Erwin Rado Theatre, 211  
Johnston Street Fitzroy.**

The AGM will include the Annual Financial Report, the Committee Report and the Election of the Committee for 1997 (if nominations for a position on the committee are seven or less no election is required). Nominations for a position on the committee should have been received at the MS8FG office by the 3rd of December, as outlined in last months newsletter.

The Open Screening will follow the AGM and complementary drinks and nibbles will be served afterwards. Enquiries phone (03) 9417 3402.

**Notice of Planning Meeting**

There will be a special 1997 planning meeting of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc, on **Saturday 11th January, from 10am to 5pm**

This is an annual meeting, which is to map out a strategy for the coming year, discuss group policy, the festival, the newsletter and field ideas for the 7:30 feature programs for the monthly open screenings, etc. All members are welcome, however anyone attending the meeting should be prepared to stay the whole day. Those who cannot commit the whole day should not turn up.

This is your chance to have an active involvement in the future direction of the Group. It is also your chance to air any grievances you may have. The meeting will take the form of a round table

discussion, with all ideas considered. Members will also be asked to take on certain responsibilities for 1997. So do come along.

**Films for Television Show**

Cath Collins from *The Film Show* on Optus "Local Vision", a community channel on the Optus' pay television, cable network, has contacted the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group. She is in the process of organising material for the above program and has asked if any member of the Group would be interested in submitting their films (transferred to video) for possible inclusion. There is no screening fee offered and only videos of films will be accepted. If you're interested contact her at home on - ph 9786 1510 after 6pm.



Barry Brown has had to step down from the MS8FG Committee due to an ongoing illness. Since coming onto the committee, Barry has been an active and dedicated member. His involvement was central to the staging of the very successful, 7:00 o'clock **Sound Event** at the monthly open screenings. We hope that you recover soon Barry.



Irene Proebsting is also leaving the committee due to the pressure of study and work commitments. Irene has worked hard in various capacities and is especially remembered for her very distinctive creative design contributions to Kiosk 8 and this years Naked 8 festival.

# Enigma 8 Film Competition.

Do you have an artistic spirit coursing through enthusiastic veins?

Do you love films?

Does your talent need an outlet and exposure?

If you answered *yes*, then you might be interested in entering the *Enigma 8 Film Competition!* Alternatively, you might have some films that you have already made which you would like to exhibit.

The competition itself involves the production of a short film during **one weekend**. The films will be **rough and raw**, but also **fresh, vibrant and unhindered**. Entries will be 3 minutes long, will be on Super 8 mm film and will feature an *object*. This *object* remains a mystery until the very last minute and you'll only be able to use "in camera" editing. You'll just have to let your artistic talents fly!

The entry fee is \$15.00, but you receive at least \$20.00 worth of colour film (including development). We can also hire film equipment to you if needed.

Best of all, you get to see your efforts projected onto the big screen.

You also have the opportunity to screen any Super 8 films (previously completed) as part of the *Enigma 8 Film Festival*. The competition films, together with exhibition films, will be screened in two separate sessions at Craig's Hotel.

You will be able to see the work of local Film Makers from the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group and the Ballarat Super 8 Film Group. So **feed your senses something different**. Behold the *Enigma!* Enjoy a beer! Experience the fringe!

### Dates.

Film distribution - Friday, 17/1/97.

Films entered into competition - Sunday - 19/1/97.

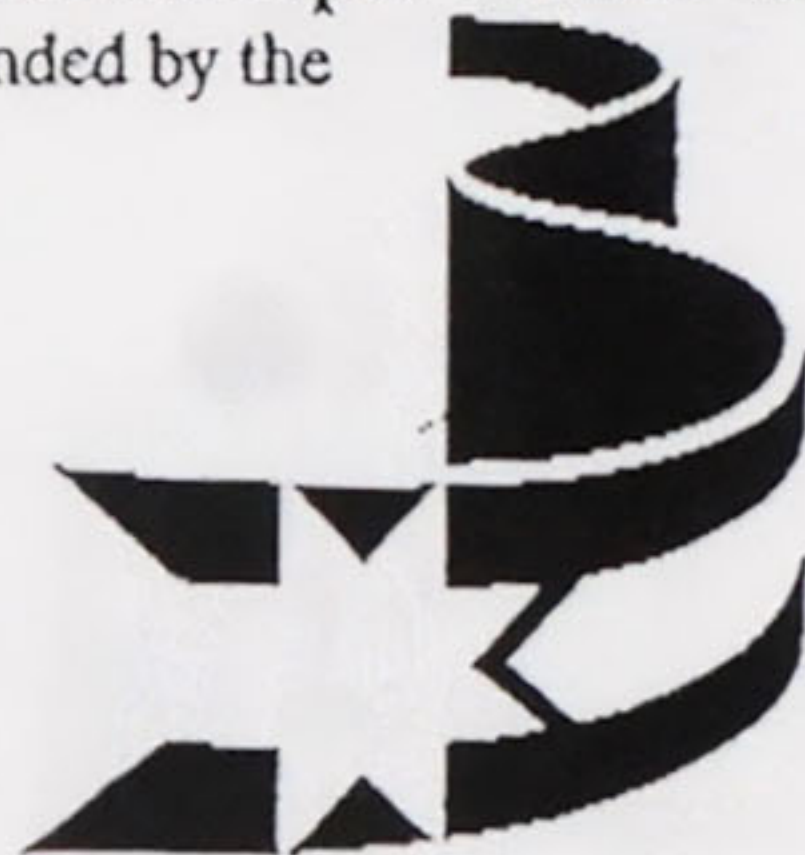
Film screening - Saturday - 29/3/97.

For more information, please ring Tim on 053 317749 or Dona on 053 331645.

A Ballarat Super 8 Film Group Event.

Supported by the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group.

Funded by the



CITY OF  
BALLARAT

# PERRY'S MOVIE MINUTES PRESENT.....

## FILM MAKER DROWNS IN SEA OF PRAISE

Lifejackets may be compulsory attire for film makers accepting awards in the future, a coroner has warned, following the tragic death of also ran Super 8 director Ted Snidley, who was drowned at last week's Super 8 Golden Gobos at the Super 8 Hall of Fame.

### MUM

Snidley, 36, who has been a committed film artist for over fifty years and has never received anything for his efforts bar a couple of dozen library fines, was being awarded the coveted, "Sorry We Ignored You and Your Films For All These Years, But You're Not a Hornbag" trophy, when the sullen tide of audience expectation suddenly arose, broke its banks and swept Snidley and presenter Eve Ward offstage and into a churning sea of excited emotion.

### DAD

Ward really thought she was going to die. "I really thought I was going to die", she said. Gasping for air and soaked with tears of joy, she managed to save herself by clinging onto a piece of emotional baggage, but to her dismay saw Snidley cast adrift by a torrid undertow of feeling, tossed about in floods of congratulation and finally disappear under a massive Mexican wave.

### DUM AND MAD

Snidley's body was discovered hours later by rescue workers only when the sea of humanity had ebbed away, press leaks suppressed and subsidiary gushes of praised bagged. An inquest has issued a warning to film makers about the dangers of undercurrents at awards nights and will recommend that legislation for the compulsory wearing of lifejackets and legropes at such nights be introduced.

## Super 8 Equipment Hire 1996

Equipment	Description	per day	per week (7 days)
Sankyo Sound Camera 1 XL-620 Supertronic	6x Zoom, Lap dissolve, single-frame, slomo, 18 or 24 fps. With mic.	\$10.00	\$40.00
Sankyo Sound Camera 2 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
Silent Cameras (various)	Various types. Simple, in various condition. Good for beginners.	\$2.00	\$10.00
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 by members. Cheapest price in town. Only covers 1 frame either side of cut, leaves both stripes free.	\$10.00 per packet of 50.	
Miller Tripod Junior	Fluid head.	\$2.00	\$10.00
Elmo ST-180 Projector	Sound, Twin track.	\$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

## ADVERTISING

Advertising space in SUPER EIGHT is available at the following rates:

Quarter-page - \$35.00

Half page - \$60.00

Flyer insert - \$20.00

(flyers provided by advertiser)

Members who wish to place small classifieds, are welcome to do so, providing they are of a minimal size. Contact the group for further information.

## The Invocation of Gesture:

### On seeing Dick and Pat Larter's "Portrait"

*"The hopeless effort of repetition is the only trace of hope that the repetition may be futile, that human beings cannot be totally controlled"* Adorno Quoted in Huyssen *After the Great Divide* p 27.

On Sunday 27th October 1996 at the State Film Theatre at 3.30pm daylight saving time in the afternoon of a sunny day I had the opportunity of revisiting Pat and Richard Larter's Super 8 films. It seems to have been in a manic production phase from 1975 to 1976, the period from which all the films in the program came and also the time spanned by the most memorable production in the program: *Portrait* (1976, 24 minutes). Hovering between a structural piece and a film portrait it gained in impact from the unwelcome news told us before the program by Corinne Cantrill of the unexpected passing away of Pat Larter the week before the screening. Ending *Naked 8* with this exclamation mark of a program seemed appropriate for more than the mere fact that Pat was strutting around *Naked* for about 80% of the program. It may be significant that in writing about *Portrait*, I am focusing on the 20% that isn't.

*Portrait* is based on the simple idea of capturing the face and gestures of Pat Larter in 3-8 second grabs, a couple of times a week over a whole year from 1975-76. One notices the changes of mood, the tensions, the fixing of the eyes on the distance, the looking away or straight into the camera, the flippancy and hairstyles, the clothes, ear rings, a cavalcade of selves, of performance roles, the rolling and bulging eyes and the open mouth (Pat Larter's trademark grimace), that at times stretches as wide as luna park itself, an avatar for the orifice, the portal to the land of pleasure and Spectacle. There is also what is going on around the face, in the corners of the frame, that one can be drawn to when you are presented with the moving image on the big screen. There is absence and presence of sunlight, the cows in the corner, the landscape of outside and inside and the different times of day. These chan(c)es bubble to the surface during the weekly ritual. These are intimate performances and you get an inkling, because of their range, that if the filming had continued on indefinitely this play would not have taxed Pat's resourcefulness and ability for re-birth.

Though Pat's recent passing laid and echoed a layer of loss over the opening token packets of *Portrait* this dissolved as the uplifting dialogue between camera and face, husband and wife hit it's stride. The husband and wife team have posited their investigations and explorations within the everydayness of family life, of the daily ritual, the daily grind, the familiarity that gives our lives meaning. It has been done against the odds, with a kind of First Settler perseverance: *"Here is Robinson Crusoe doing what he does best, labouring day in, day out, repeating his clumsy persistent craftsmanship until it is almost ritualised, a psychic wall against loneliness."* Paul Zweig *The Adventurer* (Basic Books 1974) p116. *Portrait* asserts that everyday life is much more potent in revealing the human condition than the Spectacle.

The use of the body and the subversion of society's mores predates by a decade Zedd and Kern's New York *"Cinema of Transgression"* (presented at Experimenta this year) which is a much more youth oriented explication of similar themes. The Larter's work also has a commonality with Beth B and Scott B's Super 8 films which were shown in *Retrospective* in London recently and were reported on in an earlier newsletter by Steven Ball. The Viennese Action events of the 60's featuring the likes of Otto Meuhl and also with its traces in Marc Adrian's work presented by Moucle Blackout at the Cafe Bohemio in November have a relevance here in their mutual focus on the body and the use of repetition.

Watching the films and going through "The Filmnotes" later and coming across this long list of work that had been created through a hyperbolic pace and logic: I was also left to ponder why I had never met the Larters and what it said about the isolating circles that I have been permitted (by my self, by others, and by circumstance) to swirl in. The thought also revisited me that we perform our works in such a fragmented, co-agulated and compartmentalised culture of selfishness and seclusion that is intermittently broken by events like *Naked 8*. This panopticon is also mirrored in our relationship with the landscape itself; the mythical rhythm of our (out-)land with its persistent and searing droughts, and a waiting broken every now and then by moments of release. This is perceived as a trial that requires a certain patience, a certain notion of time passing (quite the opposite of the compacted news grab) and requires resourcefulness for finding ways of working with it, to break it. I find it comforting that *Portrait* is permeated with this sense of time passing, the long haul. I would also like to suggest that this relationship to time is connected to the way we view time during the mid-life: It is as though Pat Larter has been captured entering mid-life.

As a kind of counterpoint to the considered and extended management of time, the impatience and myopia of the short snatch

found in the Nightly News that I mentioned before, is also present in *Portrait*. It is there in the strategy of the 5-8 second shot that Richard takes each time. From that perspective Pat's gestures become a string of little Haiku performances of the face that compresses the medium to its limit while still delivering complexity to the viewer.

I am reminded of Rosanne Allucquere Stone's characterisation of phone sex as the creative ability to deliver complex and dense information through the very narrow bandwidth of the telephone system.

*In the process the participants draw on a repertoire of cultural codes to construct a scenario that compresses large amounts of information into a very small space. The worker codes for gesture, appearance and proclivity and expresses these as tokens, sometimes in no more than one word. The client uncompresses the tokens and constructs a dense, complex interactive image.* in *Virtual Reality* p 351 by Howard Rheingold. Here in *Portrait* there is the same transcending of limitations through the token movements of gesture.

I am so glad that this work was shown in the viewing conditions of the State Film Centre rather than at Experimenta at the House of Cruelty to Film- The ex-Power Station in Lonsdale St, or as cycling background wallpaper to the Club Bar at the same place. These epiphanies would have been lost to me and certainly not presented with the respect and consideration our History deserves.

One also has to wonder how it is that the MS8FG with no funding can present a whole festival in such a professional, organised and clear way and that Experimenta, with a mere oily rag of \$140,000 can make such a hash of presenting its downgraded film and video program. There is a lesson there for the AFC to learn. I hope they finally learn it before the next funding allocations are made.....

but wait there is more.....

### A long P.S :Trinkets for the Natives

As I understand it experimenta approached Tony Woods while he was representing the MS8FG to put together a screening at the House of Cruelty to Film.

Tony Woods is a tireless worker for this group and its members and there is much to be admired in his initiative in curating the De Facto MS8FG Screening at Experimenta especially given the sexist and ageist statements that the Program Director of Experimenta Media Arts Shiralee Saul has made in the RRR Newsletter about *"middle-aged loser-boys given to wearing cardies over their overalls"* or her demeaning arrogance in: *"what is most galling for those trad analogue artists toiling away thanklessly in their studios hand processing Super 8 stock is that recognition seems to come easy fro those who have a computer and aren't afraid to us. Well tough..."* Is it any wonder she didn't hang around to see the films?

Anyway Experimenta got a bargain- What a bargain! Quality work, presented professionally by the artists themselves at no cost to experimenta, with a built-in audience attached and with the added bonus of being able to claim to the AFC that the MS8FG was "on board". Experimenta did not even have to hire projectors or pay a projectionist or indeed do any advertising, printing of programs or the paying of a curatorial fee. Experimenta's end of the bargain was "gold passes" for the participants- and even these trinkets have evaporated with no actual passes issued, the Guy Madden programs being postponed and the Kern program, it turns out- at an entry fee of \$22- not being part of the deal. The danger in all this, of course, is that experimenta can claim the group as one of the organisations IT is successfully servicing. It puts EMA in a position to argue that the AFC can, to avoid duplication (after all this has been re-iterated loud and clear by these AFC pow wows of funded organisations around the country this year), funnel support for Super 8 film makers through experimenta.

Such a situation would be disaster for the group. Certainly even worse than doing other's work for them and not getting paid for it on just this one occasion. The MS8FG and/or Tony should have been more hardnosed, more of an advocate for the member's interests, in getting payment for their works. An artist fee of \$20 plus \$2.50 per minute should have been the absolute minimum. Even a curatorial fee of \$250 for Tony would have been well below the going rate. A hire fee for the projectors and the projectionist would have been a reasonable request. We have to remember that Experimenta is a flagship event with a \$140,000 budget, not just a Showcase for the artist who lives around the corner, you know. In the end it is up to the artist to force such bureaucracies to function in our collective interests. Unfortunately, through the way this has been handled I believe we have set ourselves up for more of the same. Stay tuned for the AFC Cultural arm's slicing of the funding cake to see if there has been another shotgun wedding and to see which way this cookie has crumbled. Its more fun than watching Neighbours.

Dirk de Bruyn November 1996

# BEWARE THE 'VINEGAR SYNDROME'!

— Corinne Cantrill

AS another summer is about to start, bringing heat and humidity, this is the time to examine how we store our films if we hope to have them in good shape in 20, 30, 40 years from now.

There are four main threats to film: colour fading, shrinkage, mould growth, and the 'vinegar syndrome' caused by the chemical breakdown of the cellulose acetate base. All of these problems are aggravated by heat and humidity, and especially the combination of both. (We've also read of the 'rancid butter syndrome', a butyric acid attack on the base, and the 'pisces, or rotten fish syndrome' caused by decay of the photographic gelatin!)

With colour fading, the stock most vulnerable to this is colour negative. Kodachrome, on the other hand, is incredibly colour fast — we have recently seen Kodachrome films shot in 1952 which look as fresh as if just back from processing. As for Ektachrome, I don't know, but it would probably be better than colour negative. The lower the storage temperature, the slower the fading of colour. However, archive people advise against putting films into refrigerators because of the humidity problem.

It's important to provide cool, dry storage for films, and maybe even consider setting up a room with a dehumidifier and maybe even air-conditioning. Another consideration is to avoid extreme fluctuations in temperature/humidity. It's probably this that causes film shrinkage. It's important to store colour films away from naphthalene, mothballs, camphor, and any other strong aromatics, as these cause colour fading.

Recently we have been sent a 16mm film collection, mostly filmed on black and white negative in the 1950s-1960s. There are originals, dupe-negs and prints. The films have been badly stored in Sydney, near the coast, and we could smell the 'vinegar' as soon as we opened the boxes. Some of the films are seriously affected — the acetic acid fumes from these are overpowering, and quite dangerous to breathe in. We put these cans out in the garden, in the shade of course, with the lids off, to air out and to let the build-up of fumes escape. The badly affected films have wasted away — the film has become as thin as cellophane — it is literally a corpse, a ghost of its original condition. I doubt it would even be possible to project these thinned-out films.

Other films are much less affected, with just a light smell of acetic acid, but that is a warning signal to urgently take action, as the deterioration has started! Even those films that don't appear to have any smell at all are also on the way to deterioration as they are of the same vintage as the affected films, and more importantly, they have been stored with the contaminated films. The National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) advises that the fumes from the vinegared

films will contaminate other films in the same room, and that any affected film should be immediately isolated.

When we received these films we immediately contacted the NFSA who have been very helpful. Here is a summary of their advice for the care of films:

1. Ideally get a de-humidifier and air conditioner for the film storage room.
2. Get rid of all rusty film cans, as even the slightest trace of rust accelerates the film breakdown.
3. Don't store films in plastic bags. There needs to be a movement of air in the can to let gases escape.
4. Films being stored should not be tightly wound, again to let them 'breathe' and to let a circulation of air into the film layers. Films are usually tight-wound for transporting or posting away. (Most 16mm films come from the lab tight-wound on a core.)
5. Ideally, all film materials should be slowly wound through once a year to air them out. Obviously, if a film is being shown frequently that is not necessary.
6. Contaminated films should not be run on a projector or viewer for fear of spreading the problem to other films. (For ourselves, we've reserved an ancient Graflex for this purpose only.)

Kodak has recently put out a product it calls a 'molecular sieve', a small chemical sachet which is put into the film can and absorbs both H<sub>2</sub>O and acetic acid and arrests the chemical breakdown. Kodak suggests placing it in cans of new film, as well as old, in order to maximise its life. The material is not cheap for anyone who has a lot of film — it's \$80 for 120 sachets, although it may be cheaper to buy in larger quantities. This material is also toxic and tricky to use.

The NFSA advises that they do not use these molecular sieves, as they are too expensive, and they depend on the more desirable procedure of humidity and temperature control. Obviously this is easier for an institution than for those of us storing our films in a domestic situation.

The people in Toronto who run Reel Folk (see last Newsletter) use the molecular sieve to protect their archive of home movies.

If we could afford it, the ideal solution would be to have all this 1950s/1960s material reprinted now, to give the films a new lease of life, but that would cost thousands. It should be done, but it won't be done!

It's disappointing to discover that the cellulose acetate 'safety film' turns out to have an even shorter life than the old nitrate material, some of which is still existing from the turn of the century. A polyester film base is now undergoing laboratory trials, and archivists hope that this may be a solution to the problem. Meanwhile we have to be as careful as we can with the storage of our film materials.

## **Last Open Screening:**

**Tuesday 12th November, 1996**

**at 7:30 Home Movies**

Peter Lane "Flight of the Tall Ships" 8min  
James Thompson "Home Movie" 6.20min  
Corinne Cantrill "Rita Growing Up" 15min  
Ian Poppins "Debbie and Stuarts Wedding" 6min  
Gary OKeefe "Tender Emulsion" 15min  
Dirk de Bruyn "Home" 10min  
Mathew Rees "Super 8 Home Movie" 7min  
David Kuszniir "Wild Weekend"  
Maira Joseph "American Movie" 7min  
Reinhold Boeck & Heinz Boeck "2 Home Movies circa 1965" 6min

### **Open Screening films:**

Peter Lane, "Shadows" 1.75 min  
Tony Woods, "Rain" 12 min  
Dirk De Bruyn "Totens" 15 min  
David Kuszniir "The Lonnnnnnnnng DistanceRunner" 3min

## **Next Open Screening:**

**Tuesday 10th December**

**at the Erwin Rado Theatre**

**211 Johnston Street Fitzroy**

7.00pm

Sounds by David Dangerfield

7:30

AGM

Followed by the Open Screening, BYO Films.  
Complimentary drinks and nibbles will be served afterwards.

**ISSUE 120 DECEMBER 1996**

<http://www.afc.gov.au/www/sco/ms8fg.html>

# **Become a Member!**

For those of you who are not currently members, JOIN NOW, and receive to your doorstep, hot off the press, the monthly newsletter, plus enjoy the benefits of cheap equipment hire, and the Open Screenings, with feeling that you are contributing to the ongoing success and continuation of one of Australia's most prolific and energetic independent filmmaking groups!

**1 year's membership: full \$20.00 / concession \$15.00**

**contact the group at the address below**

**Editorial and Layout by Tony Woods and  
Heinz Boeck      Contact Number: 03 9417 3402  
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# **Super Eight**



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