

Super Eight



Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc.
ISSUE 124 MAY 1997

Tuesday 13 May, 7.30 pm

Student Films from the School of Studies in Creative Arts, VCA (Carlton Campus)

ONE of the last tertiary filmmaking courses in Melbourne still using Super 8 from start to finish of a film project began in the early 1970s at Melbourne State College's Media Arts Department, within the Bachelor of Education course. (I joined the staff in August 1975.) The film teaching program survived the college's rebirth as Melbourne College of Advanced Education, then its takeover by Melbourne University six years ago. When the University dismantled the teacher training program in 1994 a new School of Creative Arts was set up at VCA, an affiliate of the University, to teach a multi-disciplinary course of theory and practice in film, television, 2D and 3D art, digital media, theatre studies and creative writing. Super 8 filmmaking continues as part of that, still taught on the top floor of the John Smyth Building in the southeast corner of the University campus.

Despite the well-known problems of equipment and film stock availability, Super 8 remains an excellent teaching medium. The program has never purported to train for the film industry – the creative possibilities of filmmaking are fostered, and to this end students invariably work independently rather than in groups along film industry division-of-labour lines. Enrolment in filmmaking has always exceeded that in video production because students are quick to appreciate the qualities of photo-chemical image making, and are willing to forgo video's greater synch-sound facility. The filmmaking is informed by parallel studies in film history and criticism, communications media, animation and sound design. Despite falls in tertiary enrolment, the demand for places in the Media Arts program continues to be overwhelming.

Super 8 is used in first and second year exclusively, and in third year students can work in 16mm and new digital media as well, although some choose to continue to shoot in Super 8 because of cost, sometimes enlarging to 16mm on the JK optical printer which still functions. Unfortunately we can no longer optically print from Super 8 to Super 8 since Kodak discontinued production of Kodachrome double Super 8, needed for the Bolex camera on the JK.

Past Media Arts students of note include Nubar and Raffi Ghazarin, Matthew Rees, Darren Davies, Adrian Martin, Marie Craven, Vikki Riley, Sonia Leber, Sue McCauley and Varcha Sidwell (who became an ABC producer in Sydney).

This program of films indicates the diversity of approaches, including the extraordinary precision of the 3D animation in Richard Halstead's film *Glizda* (his mother plays the male figure invaded by the *glizda* – Polish for a revolting slug), Lucian Chaffey's affecting *Story* of growth from girlhood to womanhood; Philip Ludwig's gentle piece of sorrow and regret, *Mousetrap*; Jessica Huon's narrative *Oranges*, about a mother who refuses to leave the bathtub; Christian Price's adventure film *He Who Waits*; Simon Norton's rotoscoped study of *Princes Bridge*; Amber Zuchowski's *Dream* fantasy. Most of the films were made in 1996, together with a couple from past years, including Matthew Rees' 1984 film *Gerry Gee Jnr*.

— Arthur Cantrill

Melbourne Super 8 Film Group presents

VISION

7.30pm, Thursday 29th May
Erwin Rado Theatre, 211 Johnston Street, Fitzroy

From the Office

Open Screenings

The MS8FG committee is calling for open screening programs from group members or associates. Do you have a program of film that could be used in 1997, could you put a program together with someone else, or have you a fabulous idea for a theme program? If you do please call ph. 9417 3402.

Newsletter Aquisition

A complete set of the Super 8 Newsletter was recently bought by the Acquisitions Branch of the State Library of Queensland.

Cinestore

Many thanks to the Cinestore in Bourke St Melbourne for supplying the MS8FG with a review copy of the book Super 8 in the Video Age. Review next issue.

Brisbane Film Festival

The phone number for Trgodactyl; the Brisbane Film and Video Festival was incorrect in the last issue. For entry details phone 07 3848 9530 or 07 3358 2595.

Newsletter Classifieds

Space is available in the newsletter for buy and sell classified ads. If you want to buy or sell anything film or video the Super 8 newsletter is a great place to do it. Listings cost members \$5.00 and others \$10.00.

Newsletter Advertisements

Currently on offer is \$100 for business card size advertising in 11 issues in the newsletter. Full, half, quarter page or enclosed flyer advertising is also available. Thanks to FilmPlus, Rodney Bourke, James Thompson for currently supporting advertisements in the Super 8 newsletter.

Experimenta Writes

Responding to Steven Ball's article in the April newsletter on the Craig Baldwin Screening in the Erwin Rado Theatre Amelia King, General Manager of Experimenta writes:

Experimenta Media Arts was approached at short notice by the WA Film & Video Festival to host Craig Baldwin's tour to Melbourne.

The organisation chose to hold a screening at RMIT for media students and [its] current financial members . . . As the screening fell on a public holiday, security at RMIT was tight and no walk ups were able to attend. Baldwin also conducted a workshop and lectured Swinburne students on 11 March. A social gathering for Baldwin to which filmmakers and Experimenta Media Arts members were invited also took place.

The screening of Baldwin's work for members of the Super 8 film group was arranged by Dirk de Bruyn through the co-operation and support of Experimenta Media Arts. . .

Surprise Festival

The office received a fax from Natasha Stellmach saying the Dilate programme had a good reception.

Old Friends Update

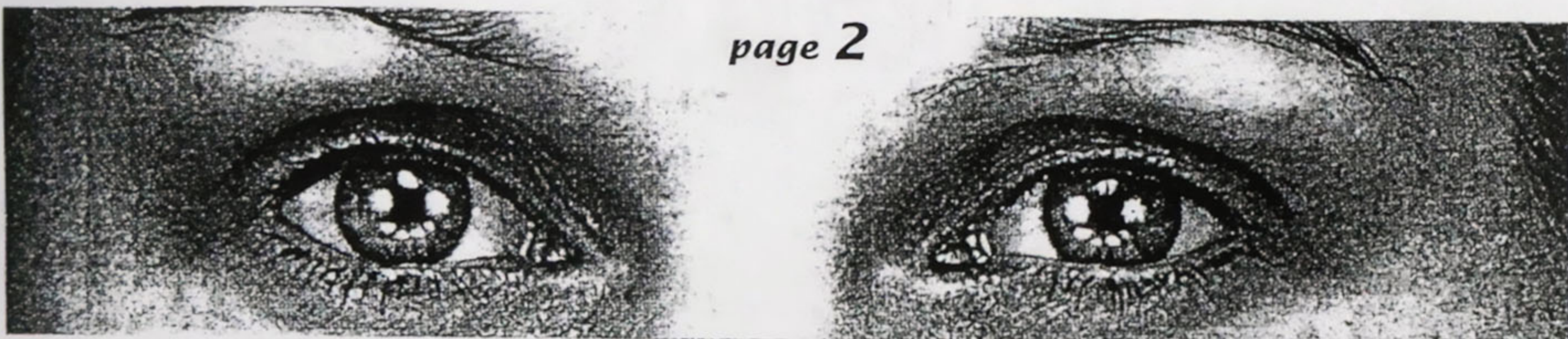
Members wishing to contact filmmaker Hector Hazzard, his new address is: 37 Ravenscroft Point, Kenton Rd, London E9, 5BA, UK.

Next Newsletter Deadline

All articles and advertising for the June newsletter to be received by Monday the 16th of June.

Dianne Duncombe
Administrator

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DILATE REFLECTIONS

1st Surprise
International Short Film Festival
Taichung, Taiwan.
April 10 - 13

Equipped for my first visit to Asia, with all the necessary inoculations, information and film cases in hand I'll refrain from using the oft thrown about pun during my 4 days at the festival, that many elements of this first fest were as much a surprise to us, the jury members and guest presenters, as they were to the organising committee. But instead will attempt to relive elements (the good, the bad and the ugly) of the festival, the MS8FG's 2 hour screening and discussion, and my stay to you, the members, filmmakers and the AFC funding body who made this event possible.

This may take several issues, so bear with me.

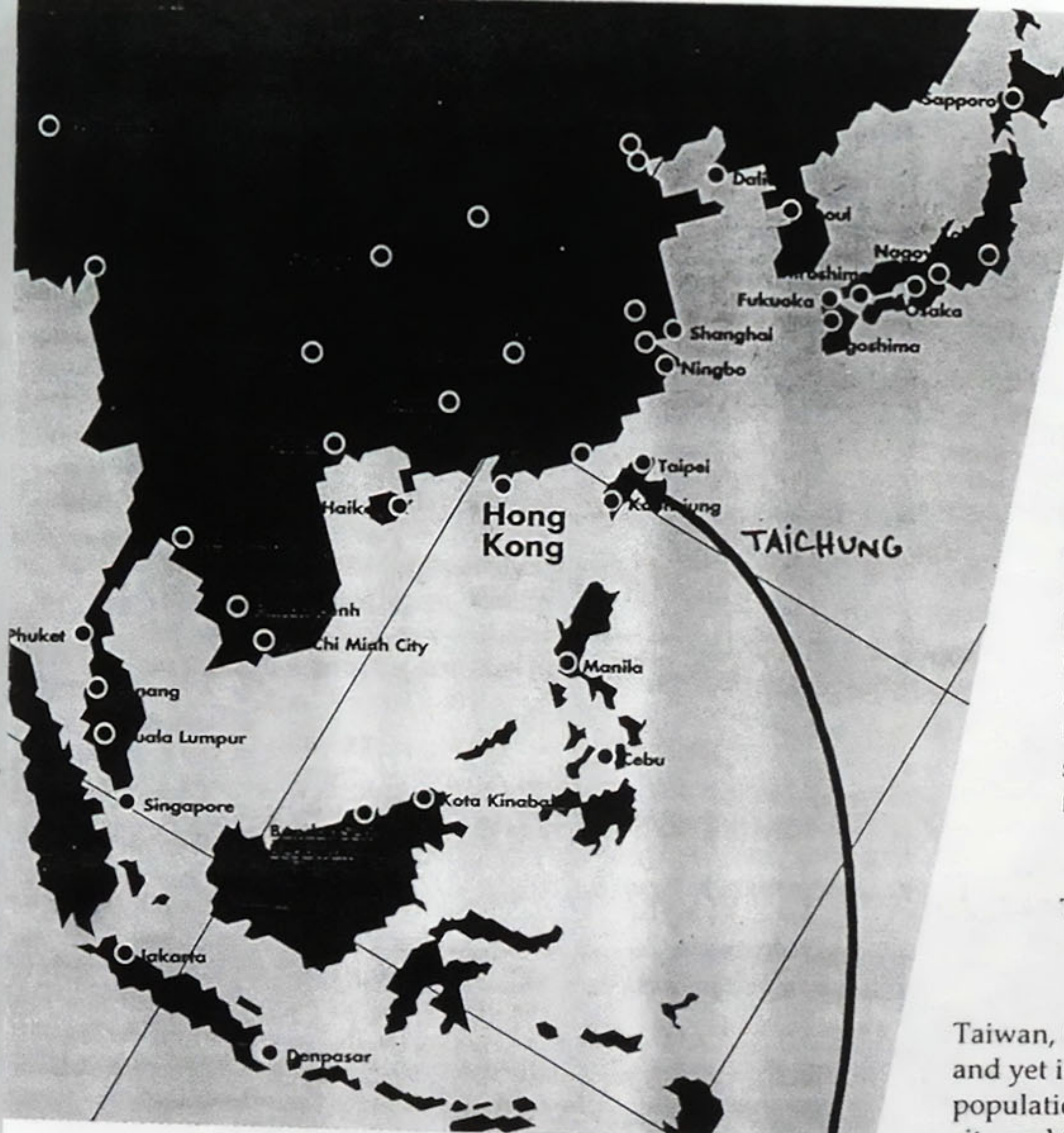
Taiwan, the island off mainland China is translated as *terraced bay* and yet it is one of the most crowded countries in the world with a population of twenty one million. Taichung, Taiwan's 3rd largest city and the cultural capital of this small island created the lively background ambience for it's city's first international film festival. As Taiwan's university city it has the greatest population of foreigners, English speakers and people generally interested in film. Knowing a few words of Mandarin can get you everywhere with the Taiwanese praising you for your mastery of their national language.

The Taiwanese like their neighbours the Chinese are extremely spiritual and superstitious. The three day billed event was actually a four day fest, quite simply because the number 4 is taboo in Chinese culture as it sounds similar to the Mandarin word for death. The hotel, where I stayed fascinatingly had a 13th floor but no 4th. At this early stage I was praising the dilate committee for not having any "fours" in the programme. White is also the colour associated with death in Chinese symbolism and to get around this at a film festival which uses a white screen as its' purveyor of image, this festival bordered the white (very makeshift) panelled screen with about 20cm of red ribbon. This had it's draw backs too because at first (before I suggested it to the curator), the screen size was cutting into the red edge which tended to crop images hideously. As the Chinese are severely into longevity, death and it's associates like divorce and the colour white cultural taboos. Red however is associated with wealth and prosperity.

The connotation behind the title as I've previously hinted at had nothing to do with the fact that a lot of the screening commencement times, the technical fiascoes, or some of the disorganisation were a *surprise*. In a quaint way the notion that film is a gift, and the buzz from when the screen lights up was the intended meaning. Their premise was also to encourage the production of more short films and young filmmakers, especially from Taiwan.

..... more on the festival winners and running of the festival, my involvement on the international jury, and how a priest successfully saved the dilate programme from aborting, in next month's news.

NATASHA STELLMACH



SURPRISE



Two visitors

Brian Doherty, who is investigating the possibility of establishing a co-ordinated and co-operative national screen arts circuit, met members of the committee and the administrator in March to outline his thinking on how such a network might operate. My understanding of this is that it would consist of three parts. One arm would be a small organisation of perhaps two people to stage between one and four major touring screen arts events a year, and to develop sponsorship and marketing strategies to finance them. This body would be autonomous of existing screen arts organisations, not function as a peak body for them, be governed by them, or have any authority over them. It would however draw much of the substance of its programs from them directly or indirectly, and depend on their facilities and/or the facilities of public art institutions. for screenings. It would be essentially a self-funding enterprise with the aim of showcasing screen arts and developing the audience for them.

Another arm (or perhaps one might say set of tentacles) would consist of all the existing screen arts organisations continuing to do their own thing, in whatever changed post-Gonski circumstances they may find themselves while the third arm or intervening layer would be a communications network - maybe on the internet - through which all (including the showcasing body) could advertise activities and venues, offer programs, etc. The effectiveness of this exchange would presumably be governed by the degree of co-operation everyone did or didn't bring to it.

This consultancy, which is continuing, is funded by the Australian Film Commission and facilitated by Sydney Intermedia Network.

Ross Hampton of Ross Hampton Communications visited the office in March to advertise and seek support for a super 8 short film competition he is running in Melbourne later in the year. The competition, like his previous and similar Perth event, is designed as a commercial entertainment and will be financed and make any profit from entry fees, admissions and sponsorship. Various conditions will apply to the length and content of the films including a mandatory mention of one of the sponsors. There is a first prize of \$3000. The competition will conclude with an event in a Melbourne nightclub at which shortlisted films will be shown on video.
Virginia Fraser

News from the Outside World

Want to showcase your short film in a major European festival? The Hannover International Film Festival specialises in film and video by young people. 1997's festival will include an hour-long program of recent Melbourne short films by filmmakers aged 30 or under curated by Chris Berry of the Department of Cinema Studies at Latrobe University.

Anyone who would like their work considered for inclusion in this package should send a VHS tape to Chris at the Department of Cinema Studies, Latrobe University, Bundoora 3083 before May 20th. For further information, call Chris or fax him on 9481 6636, or e-mail cincab@pop.latrobe.edu.au

Unfortunately Hannover IFF will not be able to fly you out to attend. However, they have set aside a small sum of money to be distributed evenly amongst those filmmakers whose work is selected.

Hi, My name is Laurie Berryman, I work for Anangu Tours in Central Australia.

Anangu Tours is a cultural tour company owned and operated by the Aboriginal custodians of Uluru (Ayers Rock). We are based in the new Anangu Culture Centre in Uluru National Park. Anangu Tours is the largest Aboriginal tour company operating in the NT.

Anangu Tours has received a grant from the Australian Arts Council for the production of a video about the tour company.

We are seeking assistance with the production of this video. If you could send us any relevant information it would be most appreciated.

If you know of any students of film or video, or any other individuals who would like to work with the traditional Aboriginal owners of Uluru on this project please contact us.

Regards

Laurie Berryman

Manager Anangu Tours

LBANANGU@onaustralia.com.au

LTV WANTS YOU. What is LTV? LTV stands for Literary Television. It also stands for the innovative and compelling work of poetry filmmakers and videographers. After 21 years of sponsoring poetry film festivals, the Poetry Film Workshop in San Francisco has culled an impressive archive, and is now making this collection available to television and cable broadcasters, educational institutions and Internet Webcasters.

How can you be a part of LTV? If you've got a short (under 15 minutes) poetry film or video, literary documentary, or a literary multimedia piece such as a Quicktime movie, then we'd like to review your work for possible inclusion in our catalog. If your work is selected for our catalog, you'll be in good company, as you'll be included among the work of Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Anne Sexton, James Broughton, Piri Thomas and Allen Ginsberg. And you'll stand a better chance of gaining recognition and financial rewards than distributing your work on your own.

Where is LTV distributed?

A number of places, including:

- * television and cable broadcasters
- * educational and entertainment Websites
- * interactive television producers
- * educational institutions throughout the United States and Europe
- * film festivals throughout the United States and Europe
- * live screenings throughout the Bay Area

And starting in 1998 LTV and the San Francisco Poetry Film Workshop will co-sponsor The National Poetry Video Festival in Chicago. All LTV submissions will be considered for inclusion in this festival.

What do I need to do to be included in LTV?

Simply request an entry form from us and fill it out. We accept submissions year-round for our distribution channels.

For more information about LTV and the Poetry Film Workshop and entry forms, visit our Website at:
<http://www.slip.net/~gamuse>.

or contact: SOMAR934 Brannan Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103 ph: 415 552-9261
fax: 415-552-9271

The 31st Annual NEW YORK EXPOSITION OF SHORT FILM AND VIDEO AND INTERACTIVE MULTI-MEDIA
November 1997

New York's premiere showcase for cutting-edge and classic independent shorts seeks narrative, animation, documentary, experimental and dance film and video under 60 minutes in length, and digital multi-media works of any size. The New York Expo is the nation's longest-running annual festival of independent shorts. Over the years, the Expo has sought out and presented the best of the new -- both unconventional, non-commercial works and classic shorts in all genres.

Finalists are screened for the public and the New York film/video community at The New School in Greenwich Village, and are seen by distributors and exhibitors in this major media market. Distribution opportunities are available through Drift, the Expo's sister organization. Selected finalists will tour to other venues. The 1997 New York Expo will feature panels and sidebar screenings, with digital multi-media works presented at Cyberfelds, an internet café.

Gold, Silver and Bronze awards are granted in each category, plus Blockbuster and Cyberfelds cash awards and

Eastman Kodak filmstock awards. Expo sponsors include: Blockbuster Entertainment, Sundance Channel, the New York State Council on the Arts, Eastman Kodak, NAFT International, Cyberfelds, and the New York Film/Video Council, among others.

The Expo seeks films/videos completed since 1995; CD-ROMs and Websites since 1993. Student and international entries are welcome. Public screening formats: 16mm and 3/4" NTSC video only; 35mm and Super 8 films are shown in video projection. Preview on VHS 1/2" video, NTSC only; CD-ROMs in Mac or PC format, Websites by URL. Entry fee: \$35. Entry Deadline: July 1, 1997.

For information and entry forms, contact:
Robert Withers, Director
New York Expo of Short Film & Video
532 LaGuardia Place, Suite 330
New York, NY 10012
voicemail (212) 505-7742
email: rswbc@cunyvm.cuny.ed
<http://yrd.com/nyexpo>



A multi-media performance by screen artists Steven Ball, Dirk de Bruyn and musician Nicole Skeltys. This is the first manifestation of an on-going project which includes music, projections, film and video. At Vision On. 7.30pm. Thursday 29th May, ErwinRado Theatre

Vision On is a response to the need for those who produce screen-based work to show it in a BYO open screening context, much like the monthly Super 8 Open Screenings but also screening 16mm, 35mm, video and computer-based work.

Also, like the regular events, the Vision On Open Screenings will be preceded by a 7.30pm programme (see below).

Admission fee to the event is \$7, full/\$5, concession & MS8FG member/free to Open Screening contributors

Owing to the variety of gauges and media that can be shown at Vision On it will be somewhat more complicated to present than the Super 8 Open Screenings. For this reason the following conditions have been set in order to make the screening more manageable:

- Work for the Vision On Open Screening must be registered with the group beforehand.
- Telephone the office between Thursday 15th and Thursday 22nd May to register your work for the screening. Specify title, name of artist(s), duration, gauge/media, and telephone contact number.
- 35mm, 16mm and super 8 film, VHS video and audio cassette can be exhibited. Computer based work is accepted however own equipment may have to be supplied.
- Work registered will be accepted on a first come first in basis until a total programme duration of 100 minutes has accumulated.
- The limit is one piece per person, maximum duration of 15 minutes.
- Only new or not widely screened work will be accepted.

TAKE THREE



//////////////////////////////////////BY HEINZ BOECK

Those who attended the April MS8FG Regular Screening witnessed an interesting range of screen presentations.

The 7:30 feature segment showcased films by Hans Kreiner, Christos Linou and Stuart Collins respectively.

Hans Kreiner's film *Collage* involved projecting a varied sequence of images onto a white, diminutive (about 18" high), two dimensional cut-out of a suburban house. On an all too obvious level this device has the effect of lending an allegorical level to the reception of images. While generally the space of the cinema screen is completely at the service of the cinematic illusion being projected onto it, here, on one level, the screen represents a constant and specific iconic space (the house) where, a family might live, we might live, the domestic sphere etc., representing a personal microcosm of existence seen in relational context to the images projected onto it.

It is interesting how dynamic this interaction can be. For instance, images of legs walking in a city street scene can reflect the grey banality of the everyday working life that incorporates our coming from and going to the home; a close-up of ants moving over the house has a surreal quality by virtue of the disorientation over the representations of scale - "giant ants attack house!", or more reflectively one remembers the ants on the garden path at home before you realise you may be looking at a promotion for pest control.

Collage included a large array of interesting and diverse images, many of them appear to be almost stock footage gleaned from other television or film sources, each seen for a relatively short duration and sometimes repeated.

From a different more farcical perspective, I was struck by the resemblance of this screening idea to a now common artistic practice of projecting gigantic images onto buildings at night often for powerful conceptual effect. Here we have a playtime version of the same sort of thing. Why not scale down your building to a more manageable size and bring it inside where your audience can be more comfortably seated.

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Christos Linou's film *2D/shad.ddw* was remarkable for its abstract expressive power. Each of a number of shots appearing in regular succession, features a stark shadow performing strikingly eloquent gestures framed within visual settings that give a context and enhance the visual impact.

I have often wondered why it is that black and white films seem to have a more direct expressive power compared to films shot in colour. It seems that when we reduce the visual elements that can lend their meaningful nuances to our perception - when there's less to decipher, less to confuse or distract our reading of the film, the intensity of the effect is then more focused.

Although *2D/shad.ddw* is shot in colour, the shadow is nevertheless the vicarious, reductive distillation of the form it represents. We are no longer so distracted by trying to decipher the person's identity or other digressions but are caused to make what we can of the movement and gesture of the shadow together with it's framing within the shot.

The shadow gestures have an uncanny metaphysical air to them - being ghostly and enigmatic indicators of the performance of an almost absent body that is only ever glimpsed. This uncanniness is emphasised by a stroboscopic effect and a certain unwieldiness in the movements which is achieved by adapting particular technical facilities in the filming (manipulating filming speed against the pace of the controlled physical movements of the protagonist). The steady but slightly irregular electronic soundtrack appropriately contributed to this effect.

#~~~~~#

Ooni Peh's film *Umbel* screened in the open screening that followed. It is rich in understatement yet evocative in its well considered use of restraint.

Umbel n. (Bot.) flower-cluster in which stalks nearly equal in length spring from common centre and form a flat or curved surface as in parsley.

The film is made up of several shots of reasonably long and approximately equal duration. It begins with a very slow pan from a close-up of a white window frame, the view out of the window totally bleached out by the bright sunlight; moving very slowly inside across the dark doors of (possibly) a kitchen cabinet. This is followed by other interior panning shots which are slightly underexposed and leave a subdued impression. The framing is carefully controlled and incorporates strong visual compositions that fill the screen. From interiors, the latter part of the film is set outside, predominantly around images taken from a railway marshalling yard - the camera weaving over a pile of rocks; moving in close-up over the details across railway sleepers; and then taking in the abandoned rail wagons in wide-shots that are slightly over exposed. In one shot the screen is filled by the immense white glow of the sky, rail wagons just evident in the bottom of the frame until they too are briefly consumed by the bright flood of light like a nuclear flash.

The film's minimalist style owes much to early formalist experiments in film form. In *Umbel*, it is refreshing to see film shots not being used flippantly but being given time to form and unfold to our contemplation. There's a directness and simplicity in the enunciation of each shot that leaves an impression of uncluttered clarity.

Steven Ball's sound track is made up of noises, organised sounds and music fragments sparsely interspersed among moments of silence. There is only a random synchronicity between the soundtrack and the film's images, however the overall effect is well conceived in creating an interesting field of complimentary counterpoint and contextual configurations.

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Last Open Screening:

Tuesday April 8th, 1997: 7.30pm
Films with an Adelaide Connection by Hans Kreiner, Stewart Collins and Christos Linou

Open Screening:

Umbel (18 mins, cassette sound, 18fps) Ooni Peh
Whoever You Are (12.5 mins, cassette sound, 18fps) Peter Lane
B.M.'96 T.W. (5 mins, cassette sound, 18fps) Tony Woods
Beast of Brunswick (3 mins, sound, 18fps) Perry Alexander and Saccha Harasymin
Brookes Jetty (cassette sound, 24fps) Lee Smith
Water Music (3mins, 13 secs, cassette sound, 18fps) Irene Proebesting and Barry Brown
Brothel Battles at Full Throttle (18fps, cassette sound) Scott Hale

Next Open Screening:

Tuesday 13th May, 1997
Erwin Rado Theatre,
211 Johnston St, Fitzroy

At 7pm: Chris Knowles,
Sound piece, 30 mins

At 7.30pm: Student Films from the
School of Studies in Creative Arts,
VCA (Carlton Campus) See article
inside

Followed by: An Open Screening
BYO Films (and take-up reel please)

ISSUE 124 MAY 1997

<http://www.cinemia.net/super8/>

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 \$25.00 / concession \$20.00

contact the group at the address below

Cut and pasted by Tony Woods, James Thompson

Phone: 03 9417 3402

Fax: 03 9417 3804

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Super Eight



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