

Super Eight



Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc.
Issue 126 July 1997

**NEXT OPEN SCREENING (NOTE TEMPORARY CHANGE OF VENUE)
Tuesday 8th July**



at 7.00pm sonic works by **Anti Riot Quartet**

at 7.30pm: **FUNDED BY THE AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION**

Presented in collaboration with Open Channel and the AFC

The nervousness over the future of film funding in Australia that rippled through the film culture sector as a result of Gonski's recommendations seems to have abated, at least temporarily, following the Federal Budget. At this screening we have an opportunity to reflect on a handful of films funded by the Australian Film Commission which represent another side of the production funding equation to the publicly vaunted *Priscilla...s* or *Shines* as examples of the 'success' of Australian screen culture. While far from commanding extravagant production budgets this sort of work is equally, if not more, at risk when rumours of budget cuts are in the air.

Each of this evenings films evokes an atmosphere of enclosed space that become places inhabited more by imagination and memory than by any tangible physical presence. The intimacy, intensity and lyrical potential of super 8, with further enhancement of its qualities through post-production on other gauges and media, plays a central role in the creation of these redolent constructions.

In funding these films the AFC has recognised the imaginative efficacy of super 8 film as an originating medium, the aesthetic and exhibition possibilities afforded by the post-production formats, and has supported their realisation through initiatives such as the No Frills Fund and the more recent New Image Research Program.

The programme spans an eleven year period. The films were finished variously on video, 16mm and 35mm. Screened here on video.

Adaptor (19 mins, 1986, video) Michael Hill

E.G. (7.5 mins, 1990, originally 35mm) Virginia Hilyard

Pale Black (13 mins, 1992, originally 16mm) Marie Craven

500 Acres (9 mins, 1997, video) Lucy Lehmann

Programmed by Steven Ball, thanks to Lisa Logan (Australian Film Commission), Lazar Krum (Open Channel), Tony Woods and Tim Patterson.

FOLLOWED BY AN OPEN SCREENING ■ BYO SUPER 8 FILMS AND VIDEO

OPEN CHANNEL

13 Victoria Street ■ Fitzroy

VISION

VISION ON ■ THURSDAY 29TH MAY, 1997

UnAustralian by Steven Ball, Dirk de Bruyn and Nicole Skeltys

A MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCE: the first manifestation of an ongoing project on a hike through eclectic constructions of Australianisms which include music, projections, film, and video.

"We'll build a world of our own,
which no-one else can share.
All our troubles we'll leave
far behind us there.
And I know we will find
there'll be peace of mind
When we live in a world of our own."
The Seekers

When John Howard and the Liberal Party made "For all of us" their campaign slogan in the 1996 election, they set the stage for the emergence of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party. The slogan, at first glance, seems innocuous enough. Howard wanted "us" to believe that his government would be benign and won office on a promise of a return to a more "comfortable" past where The Seekers were top ten, footy was played on a Saturday and "Art" was something you looked at on Sundays in the National Gallery. But the "us" in the campaign slogan carries with it, as many commentators have since pointed out, a sense of a "not-us", a "them". As any deconstructionist could tell you, all words and their meanings are inherently unstable and carry within them the seeds of their own contradiction and ultimate betrayal. It's "them" not "us" who are the targets of Hanson's vitriol. And it's "them" who are being excluded from and through policy decisions made by the current Liberal federal government. The unemployed, the working poor, those on welfare, aboriginal people, students on Austudy. Their lives are not destined to be comfortable.

UnAustralian took up this theme from a parallel perspective. The debate on national identity has, since the seventies, stemmed from a desire to identify those aspects of Australian culture which make "Australianess" unique and it has always carried within it an unexpressed desire to preserve Australian culture from contamination. All debates on nationalism must eventually contend with the other of that which they seek to identify. There are two sides to a coin in any game of two-up. But what does it mean to be UnAustralian?

These tropes were taken up in **UnAustralian**. The performance was an eclectic mix of media - multimedia in the true sense of the word. It began with the screening of "This Place Australia", a 16mm film of a re-enactment of the exploits of Wentworth, Blaxland and Lawson as they attempted to cross the Blue Mountains. In another context the film may have been seen as a charming and whimsical piece of kitsch (strapping explorers, "savages", lots of gum trees and a cheesy commentary in that peculiar ABC presenter voice of the 1950's), but in the context of the performance it raised questions about how Australians have chosen to represent themselves to themselves in the past. This theme was followed up in the second screening - a film used to lure Dutch migrants to Australia in the 1950's - but raised further questions about how Australia chose to represent itself to the world. De Bruyn's own commentary made up of anecdotes from Dutch migrants who were lured by such promotional material and who found Australian life at odds with what they had been told served as counterpoint to the film's depiction of Australia as a land of milk and honey. Both films were more interested in a sense for what they left out, what remained unsaid, rather than what could be seen.

The performance then switched focus to become more decidedly experimental introducing computer imagery, sound and music sampling and video projection. Over collages of iconographic Australian images (Namatjira paintings, landscape, waratah and De Bruyn draped in an Australian flag a la Pauline Hanson and Cathy Freeman) Skeltys resampled the famous Seekers song "A World of Our Own". The total effect was dislocating and powerful. When a group of mixed race primary school children took up the song in the next video sequence, their lack of cohesion and inability to hold the tune and tempo seemed more emblematic of national identity than any government propaganda film could ever hope to be.

The performance itself was a metaphor for the questions it raised. The mixing of media which traditionally sit uncomfortably together - the big screen of cinema and the small screen of the computer - showed too that what may seem separate is always a part (apart). There can be no such thing as Australian without Un-Australian - there is no "us" if there is no "them". Any term which seeks inclusion will also highlight exclusion. There can never be a "national identity" as the concept of identity deals in singularities. **UnAustralian** made these points well.

Lisa Gye

VISION ON Open Screening Films

Brian's Body (8 mins, 16mm)
Organ Pipes (6 mins, video)
Aries Inlet (5 mins, super 8)
A Matter of Survival (9 mins, video)
Colors (4 mins, 35mm)
My Brother Gerry (10 mins, video)
The Hungry Wallet (5 mins, video)
Bang (5 mins, video)
How to Make a 35mm Film
(5 mins, super 8 & 35mm)
The Thoughts of an Eye (6 mins, super 8)
Untitled (25 secs, 16mm)

Moira Joseph
Julian Savage
Cantrills
Tony Woods
Nick Ostrovskis
Matthew Rees
Christos Linou
Hans Kreiner

Virginia Fraser
Nick Selenitsch
Perry Alexander & Atlantis

From Super 8 to 16mm and Beyond

Three years ago I had my film **Pearl** (super 8, 17 mins) blown up to 16mm. I was so pleased with the professional results of this procedure that I decided to do the same with **Brian's Body** (super 8, 8 mins, 1997).

The film was sent to Interformat in California USA, where a superb job was done. I dealt directly with Michael Hinton (phone: 0011 1 510 523 1100, fax: 0011 1 510 523 1945) who seems to enjoy doing small independent films as it makes a nice diversion from the high pressure Hollywood mega-budget productions. I found Michael, once again, to be reliable and excellent to work with. The cost was \$1,000 (US) which involved producing an interneg, workprint, removing splices and stretch printing. The film was insured by Tony Gibbs from H. Woods Insurance and was transported to and from the USA using Federal Express.

On its return to Melbourne **Brian's Body** went to Cinevex for a trial and release print. Here the negative needed attention to detail regarding the density and contrast. The original soundtrack by Markus Kellow was recorded on DAT and Cinevex organised transferring this onto 16mm. I found Cinevex extremely helpful and obliging and can highly recommend their services.

Finally the 16mm version of **Brian's Body** was transferred to SP Betacam (broadcast quality) and VHS. This was done at AAV in South Melbourne. Grading the 16mm original to video format using the state of the art facilities at AAV can be a fairly stressful and expensive procedure (as time = \$). Some prior knowledge in regard to how much contrast, colour, density, etc, is needed to reach the final result on video, certainly helps towards achieving the final 'look'. Pamela Hammond at AAV was extremely helpful and understanding regarding the importance of completing the transfer with a highly professional result. I can recommend the high standard of quality and care she showed towards me and my project.

Post-production funding for **Brian's Body** was provided by the Australian Film Commission and now, as a 16mm print, the film has been accepted into many local and overseas film festivals.

Moira Joseph

Advance Notice of Next Vision On Screening

The next **Vision On** event has been provisionally scheduled for Thursday 28th August. The word is that it could well feature the work of a local band of performance poets, in person and on screen. Confirmation and full details in the next issue of this newsletter.

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On the 4th and 5th June 1997 at the AFC Theatre in Sydney, I represented the MS8FG at a conference on the future directions for screen culture. The following is a brief summary. The Australian screen culture industry organisations at the sector summit agreed to form ASCIA (Australian Screen Culture and Industry Association). It will be a national peak body; membership based with organisations as members; member organisations must meet the screen culture definition and be not-for-profit organisations; election to the committee/board of directors will be state based.

Aim of ASCIA: ASCIA is an industry association which represents and promotes screen culture through advocacy, networking and industry alliances.

Definition: Screen culture is the environment in which film and other screen programmes are developed, made, seen and discussed. It includes screenings and festivals, conferences, seminars, publications, industry awards, productions and entry level training, contextualised exhibition and distribution, research and information, commentary and critical analysis of film and the industry.

Four Key Messages: These are the statements that shape where we want to be in the future that sets us apart from others:

1. Screen culture provides unique opportunities for Australians to work in the film, television and multimedia industries.
2. Screen culture is an excellent use of taxpayers' money and returns more than it costs.
3. Australian screen culture internationalises our film, television and multimedia industries and projects our country to the world.
4. Australian screen culture inspires and shapes Australian culture.

Tony Woods

Last Super 8 Open Screening ■ 10th June, 1997

At 7.30pm

Hardly ever seen super 8 films made between 1976 and 1986 programmed by Virginia Fraser.

Untitled (5 mins, 1976)

Leaves (7 mins, 1988)

Winter Blues (5 mins, 1981)

Erotic Dream (3 mins, 1981)

Political Science (3 mins, 1986)

Bath Girls '84 (12 mins, 1984)

Betsy-Jane Osborne

Virginia Fraser

Brenda Fresh

Brenda Fresh

Brenda Fresh

Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley

Open Screening Films

Smart Little Motor (10 mins)

F.P.S. (13 mins)

Naughty Boy Trailer (8 mins)

Steven Ball

Tony Woods

Tony Lawrence



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國際驚奇短片節

final dilate reflections.....

THE LAST SAY ON THE SURPRISE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, TAIWAN

The Films

Irrespective of its problems, the festival certainly attracted a great variety of filmmaking talent. An all gauge festival, the competition included 50 international films of high calibre. My favourites were coincidentally also the winning films.

The Best Film, Video & Taiwanese Entry all received US \$300 & a trophy.

BEST FILM: The Red Fish, Holland, 13 min, 35mm, 1995, Dir: Amir Razi

A narrative "tail" about 2 young boys. One who buys a super 8 camera at a flea market & ends up following & filming the other who has just bought a red fish. It all ends at the ocean through the B&W viewfinder of the Super 8 camera. Fantastic that the winning film should have a Super 8 camera as its' focus.

BEST VIDEO: Dream of The Sea, Colombia, 25 min, doco, 1996, Dir: Javier Cabrera

Again another oceanic theme, about the Tayrona natives who for 1000's of years have inhabited & lived in harmony with the luxuriant forest & the sea, in the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta.

BEST TAIWANESE FILM: Dooms Day, 15 min, 16mm, 1996, unlisted director

This socio-political animation is told by a loveable tear-drop type creature as it lollops through the last remaining countryside smelling flowers.

Most Taiwanese entries that appealed actually used cartoon animation, mechanised robotics or documentary to illustrate the issues of power domination versus the people & that of the environment.

It is notable that Taichung (the cultural centre of the country) does not have a film school & that the closest is 30 kms south in Tainan.

THE JURY SPECIAL AWARD: The Bloody Olive, Belgium, 10 min, 35mm, 1997, Dir: Vincent Bal

A hilarious B&W 50's quadruple crossing over the Christmas turkey that had us all in stitches.

Genre, USA, 5 min, 16mm, 1996, Dir: Don Hertzfeldt

Again a total belly aching animation that plays with the struggles of the creative process as animation & reality collide. A hapless cartoon character is dragged through a spectrum of cinematic situations by his frustrated animator. Melbourne audiences may be viewing this one soon.

OTHER NOTABLES: Le Trier Belgium, 11 min, 16mm, 1996, Dir: Philippe Boon & Laurent Brandenbourger, deals with a frustrated moralistic canned pea factory worker. **The Little Seed** Belgium, 15 min, 35mm, 1996, Dir: Michel Vereecken. Set in 1969 in a small Wallonian village with superb child actors about an arranged marriage. **The Lucky Bastard & Chimes at Ten** Melbourne, 6 & 8 mins, 16mm, 1996, Dir: Zoran Rakovic. Unfortunately these films lost their Australian humour with a non-Australian audience although I laughed a belly full.

It's disappointing that out of the 50 competition films only 5 were made by women. It's notable then that the MS8FG's 90 minute dilate programme of 18 films contained 7 directed by women.

Special International Guests

The MS8FG were fortunate to be sharing this bill with only one other: the esteemed Flemish animator born in 1928, Raoul Servais.

He was a delightful man with an exquisite sensitivity in representing the unspoken but global language of film through animation to an audience of any language. His films often deal with the incompatibility of modern technology & ancestral tradition & have won awards at Cannes, Venice, Sydney & Berlin to name a few. He currently works on 35mm (we saw *Sirene* 1996, *Chromophobia* 1966, & *Pegasus* 1972). However he was excited to see a Super 8 programme included in an international festival & praises the medium.

THE DILATE PROGRAMME FILMS FROM THE MS8FG

When the 90 minute programme finally screened as the last event on the last evening, most people were cinematically exhausted. I was virtually brain-drained. Still, the venue packed its largest crowd (approx. 300 including 3 ex-Melburnian's now living in Taiwan) for a super 8 bonanza.

My spiel (about 40 minutes) included a brief history of super 8 filmmaking, the use of cameras &

film stocks, a history of the MS8FG, & an introduction to the **dilate** programme & its' filmmakers. This was enhanced for the Taiwanese audience by a translator.

The actual projection has a glorious history all of its own that I must recall for you.

A day before the programmed screening day (after having hounded the curator for several days prior) I was presented with a tiny, dirty Fuji-matic Super 8 projector. Was this a joke? This little piece of archaeology was possibly suitable for Barbie & Ken's home movie nights on 200ft reels but was definitely not part of the picture for an international programme with two 800ft reels.

I laughed, then argued, then nearly wailed.

Xavier Liao actually suggested I split the programme on smaller reels to accommodate the wee Fuji. There's no need to repeat my response dialogue. The throw on that little machine would have necessitated cushions for all on the stage. Eventually Xavier understood the seriousness of his miscalculation & inadequate planning. It did amaze me that irrespective of the many concise faxes concerning projector models & equipment requirements I had sent, how little he had absorbed & appropriated.

Ideas were dribbled, such as getting a projector couriered from Hong Kong or Singapore or even getting the SVHS copy from Melbourne but he realised it was all too late for these sorts of shenanigans. He even concluded that if they couldn't locate a projector that it just wouldn't be shown. I baulked & gently whispered words of wisdom along the lines of AFC funding, International Programme, bad press...

They must have had some impact because the next day (& the last possible screening opportunity) he had a Priest on his mobile phone by the name of Friar Don Glover. He runs workshops for students in video & media studies in a centre in Tainan, the south of Taiwan. He also happened to own an immaculate Elmo with Halogen lamp, magnificent throw & swanky clean gate. This he schlepped north that day to arrive just in time for our technical run through, & insist he was projecting. To my glee!

Both of us choreographed the programme without so much as a gate hair, me doing sound & Don projecting, more professionally than I'd yet experienced.

I thanked Don formally & privately told him he was a saviour. "That's my profession" he replied in true American style.

THANKYOU, for without the support of the following, **DILATE** wouldn't have existed: The Australian Film Commission, Steven Ball, Heinz Boeck & Tony Woods (of the dilate committee for their long hours of input), The 18 Filmmakers, Xavier Liao for the invitation and Friar Don Glover
Natasha Stellmach

BLESS MY SOUL IT'S MIFF TIME

Melbourne's most persistent independent filmmaker and super 8 superstar Bill Mousoulis premieres his new, and first, 16mm feature **My Blessings** at this year's Melbourne International Film Festival. The festival advance publicity describes the film as "Genuinely independent filmmaking that recalls the minimalist, austere dramas of Robert Bresson", of course we expected nothing less! MIFF runs from 24th July to 10th August. For info about when Bill's film is screening and all other programme details, contact MIFF on 9417 2011 or check out the website at <http://www.cinemia.net/MIFF>.

FROM THE OFFICE

Cinestore Information

The last newsletter featured a review of the informative publication, *Super 8 in the Video Age: Using amateur movie film today*. The book costs \$29.95 and is available from the Cinestore located at 43 Bourke St Melbourne, ph 9654 3944. Thanks again to the Cinestore for supplying the MS8FG with the review copy.

Festivals

The Ballarat Super 8 Film Group is holding Enigma Underground (film event) as part of The Ballarat Winter Festival on Weds. 16th July, 8.30pm, at the Provincial Hotel in Lydiard St. Ballarat. Films are being received for the event until July 2nd, so phone Tim Block on (03) 53317749 if you are interested.

The 7th Annual Women on Women Film Festival (WOW) is calling for entries. The deadline is Friday 1st of August. Contact WIFT Australia for details ph (02) 9332 4584, Fax (02) 9331 7145, Email: wift@womens.net.au

Super 8 Filmmaking

Moira Joseph will be taking a new Super 8 film workshop for the CAE on July 13th. Phone CAE for details.

The 8mm Film Guide is a terrific little publication with lots of information on small gauge film issues and only costs \$6.00 for 4 issues. Contact Rodney Bourke, Box 122 Highett, Vic 3190.

All members please note. Your films are wanted for the next open screening.

Film for Sale

MS8FG committee member Steven Ball has been making enquiries on the internet about Kodak filmstocks for the article published in the June newsletter and received this interesting reply from Alan Doyle in the UK. "Hi, just a note to tell you I have 2,000 rolls of Kodak surveillance super 8 film for sale. This is 5293 200ASA motion picture negative in a normal cartridge. You can push to 400 or 800ASA. It is only good for Telecine conversion, because you can neg develop only. It was used for newsreel scenes in Oliver Stone's film Nixon." If you're interested in these stocks contact alan@super8.demon.co.uk.

Western SuburbsCinema

The Sun Film Society is operating weekend film programmes from July 11th at the Sun Theatre in Yarraville. Memberships cost \$18 and can be bought in the cinema foyer. We wish them well with this venture.

Exhibition

Recent paintings by Tony Woods will be on view at the Dianne Tanzer Gallery, 108 Gertrude St Fitzroy, from Tuesday 29th July. Gallery hours are 1-6pm Tues-Sat.

Website

Have a look at the group's website at <http://www.cinemedia.super8/> if you get the opportunity.

Dianne Duncombe
Administrator

Nick Ostrovskis presents Looping the Lounge

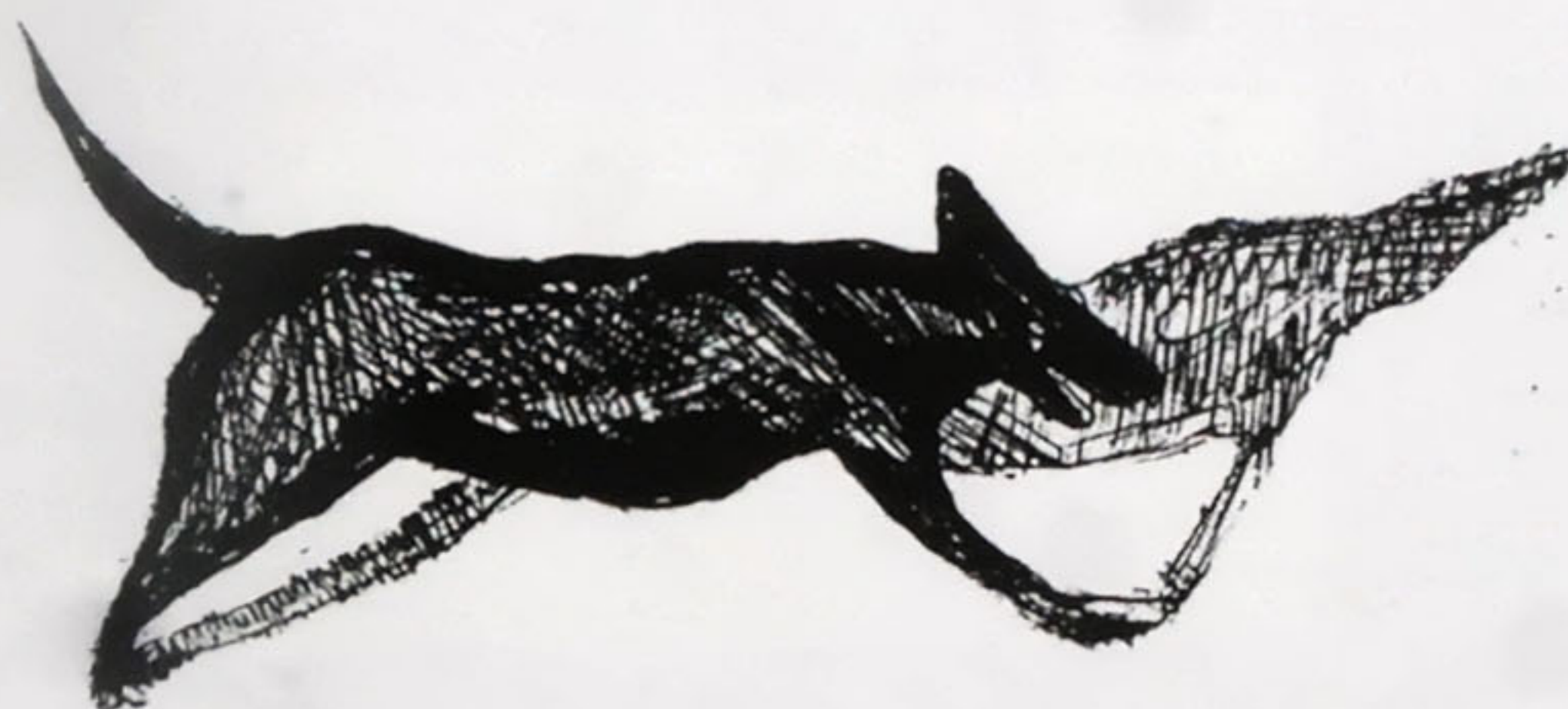
I show super 8 at The Lounge every Friday night. A film loop is a bit of film (approx 1 metre) spliced into a loop so that the film repeats over and over continuously. I've been working at The Lounge for about 14 months. I show on a red wall which is cluttered with ever changing monthly exhibitions of art. At first it was a bit of a challenge, as all my projections had a strong colour. Now I find that any high contrast black and white images work excellently. I've shown animated patterns, strobe effects, kaleidoscopic images, time lapse and street shots. I'm also experimenting with the space itself. I'm suspending different coloured cloths from the ceiling in different parts of the room and projecting on them. I use four projectors and the purpose of it is to provide a visual backdrop to the music which layers throughout the night. I like The Lounge. It has a relaxed friendly atmosphere and management let me have complete control of the presentation.

The Lounge
243 Swanston Walk
Melbourne
Fridays 10pm - 4am
free before 10pm (\$2 after)

Come and say hello

Nick Ostrovskis

Nick also presents projections at **SWITCHED-ON** along with mello electro, deep house and acidic lounge sounds at the Builders Arms, Gertrude Street, Fitzroy 8pm - 1am every Tuesday night. Recommended for a post Open Screening unwind.



NEXT OPEN SCREENING
WILL BE AT
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13 VICTORIA STREET ■ FITZROY

DETAILS ON THE FRONT PAGE



ISSUE 126 July 1997

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Constructed by Steven Ball

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Super Eight



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