

# Super Eight

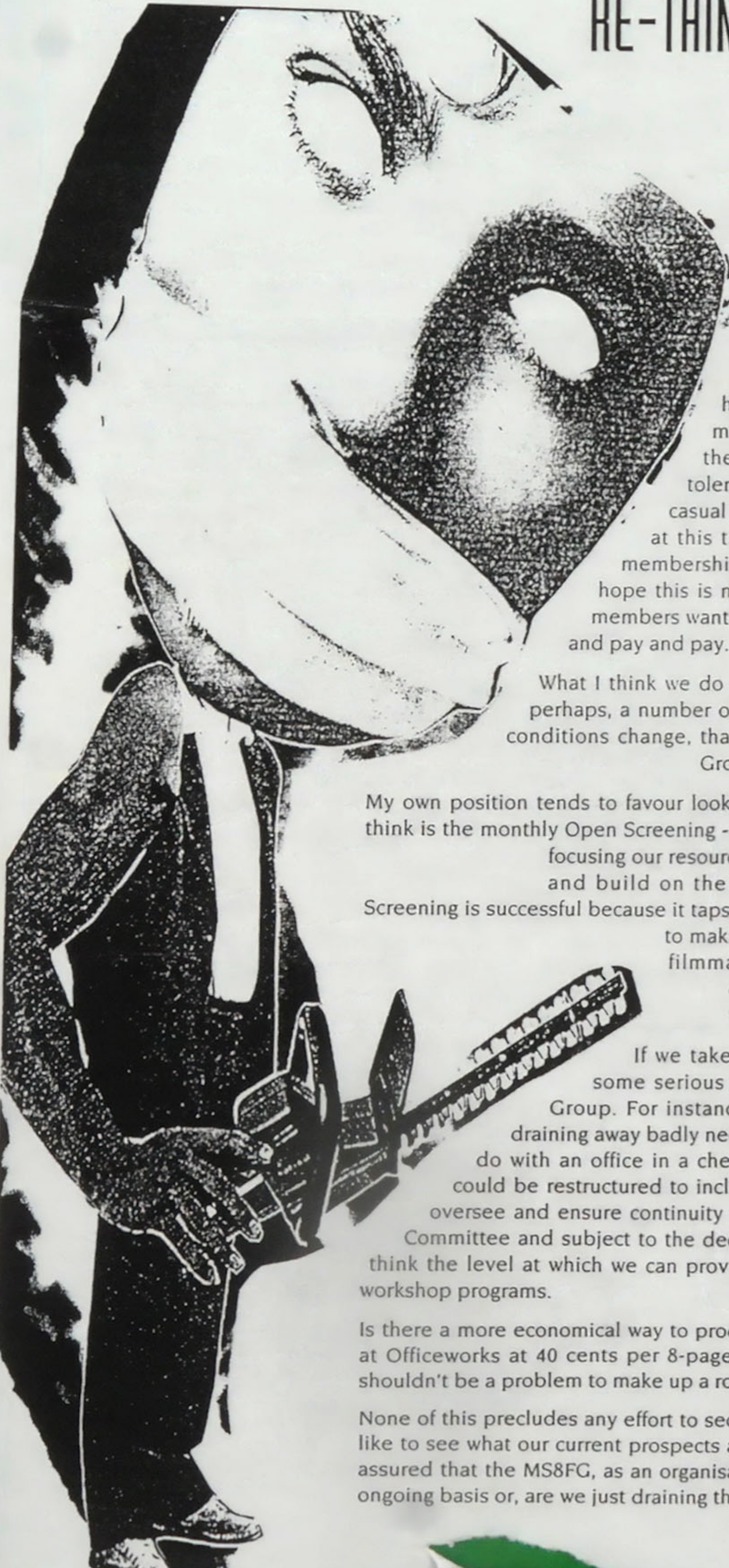
Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc.  
ISSUE 145 April 1999

# S8

## RE-THINKING THE FUTURE

of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group

Heinz Boeck



It's a very unsettling time to consider the ongoing future of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group at present. Since the AFC gave notice of its intention to cease funding the Group in January of this year, there has been no indication of what practical changes will be applied at an organisational level (vis a vis the Committee) to meet the funding shortfall. Sure, the Administrator's part time position has gone and there has been a push to increase annual membership fees and door charges. Personally, I believe there is a limit where these raised charges will not be tolerated by increasing numbers of members and our more casual non-member audiences. We may already have arrived at this threshold which will make itself felt by more lapsed memberships and lower attendances at the Open Screenings. I hope this is not the case. I don't buy into the argument that if the members want the MS8FG to continue to operate then they must pay and pay and pay.

What I think we do need is a realistically costed, forward thinking plan - perhaps, a number of plans with fall back contingency strategies built in if conditions change, that look to the ongoing, long term continuance of the Group.

My own position tends to favour looking at what it is that the MS8FG does best - which I think is the monthly Open Screening - and paring back our other activities and expenses. By focusing our resources and attention on the Open Screening we can refine and build on the operation of this monthly institution. The Open Screening is successful because it taps into the energy of filmmakers' individual commitment to making films, having their work screened and seeing other filmmakers' work, making for an extended and dynamic discourse of cultural ideas. Maintaining this forum is the key function of the MS8FG.

If we take the above course, then we need to ask ourselves some serious questions about restructuring the operation of the Group. For instance, do we need a fully serviced office space that is draining away badly needed financial and people power resources? Could we do with an office in a cheaper rental, lesser profile location? The Committee could be restructured to include the position of President (or, some such title) to oversee and ensure continuity of the day to day requirements of the Group via the Committee and subject to the decisions made by the Committee. We may need to re-think the level at which we can provide equipment hire services and the viability of the workshop programs.

Is there a more economical way to produce and distribute the Newsletter such as printing it at Officeworks at 40 cents per 8-page issue and reducing the overall number printed. It shouldn't be a problem to make up a roster of volunteers to fold 100 or so issues.

None of this precludes any effort to secure funding and/or sponsorship in the future. I would like to see what our current prospects are if we continue on as we are at present. Can we be assured that the MS8FG, as an organisational forum for innovative film, is sustainable on an ongoing basis or, are we just draining the Group's capital resources until there is nothing left?

# Narrative Film-making : An Overview

a workshop co-ordinated by Bill Mousoulis

This workshop is an introduction to narrative film-making for prospective producers and/or directors. It consists of a very broad overview of all the areas involved. If the workshop is successful, further ones will be held in the future, focusing in more detail on the particular areas.

- The First Stage**
- the script
  - financing
  - overall timeline
- Pre-Production**
- production base, legal requirements
  - budgeting
  - the crew, technical designs, equipment
  - storyboarding, shot list
  - the cast, acting style, rehearsals
  - scheduling, locations

Bill Mousoulis is one of Melbourne's foremost independent film-makers. He has directed over 60 films, both narrative and non-narrative, over the past 17 years. He is currently in post-production of his fourth low-budget feature, *Desire*, a self-funded 16mm narrative.

- The Shoot**
- people management
  - problem solving
- Post Production**
- editing
  - completion
- The Final Stage**
- delivery materials
  - festivals
  - marketing, distribution
  - fame, glory and fortune

## Welcome to new members

MS8FG welcomes new members MW Bristow, Joe Coen, Tim Freebairn, Mike Staude, Fiona Muir, Joanna Underwood, and Victoria Armytage. These new members have joined the group during February/March.

## Group website

Redevelopment of the group's site has begun and should be online by the end of April. Apart from re-working current material, we are hoping to include a monthly featured film maker (usually those booked for the Monthly 7:30 slot) which will include a bio, stills, and if available, Quicktime movies of some of the film makers work - this will be entirely dependant on whether or not the featured film maker has video transfers. There will also be downloadable membership and workshop enrolment forms, and selected articles from the newsletter.

## Open Channel

OC have been approached about the possibility of them helping out MS8FG. Initial reactions - at all levels of OC - have been enthusiastic. The OC management committee will be deciding this week on a proposal to provide a 30% discount on facilities hire to people who are members of both MS8FG and Open Channel, and we are also investigating relocating the MS8FG offices to Open Channel in a bid to reduce our rental charges. There are also plans to run joint workshops with Open Channel, and cross promotion of activities and events.

## Meetings

### MS8FG Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 20th April, 6:00pm at the group's offices. All members are welcome to attend.

### Festival Planning Meetings

Now held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at the group's offices, beginning at 6:30pm.

## Volunteers Needed

The group needs to significantly raise its profile if it is to survive. We need people who are willing to do the leg work of publicising the groups activities if we are to ensure the group exists beyond 1999. Anyone interested in working on a publicity campaign for the group please contact Ben Ryan, 9326 3954.

## Workgroups

If any members are preparing to start work on shoots during May and beyond, and need helpers (cast and crew), please contact the office to advertise in the newsletter—this service is done for free.

## Workshops

A comprehensive workshop program has been scheduled through until mid-June. For full details please contact the office to have the current brochure sent out, or contact Ben Ryan: 9326 3954.

## April 1999

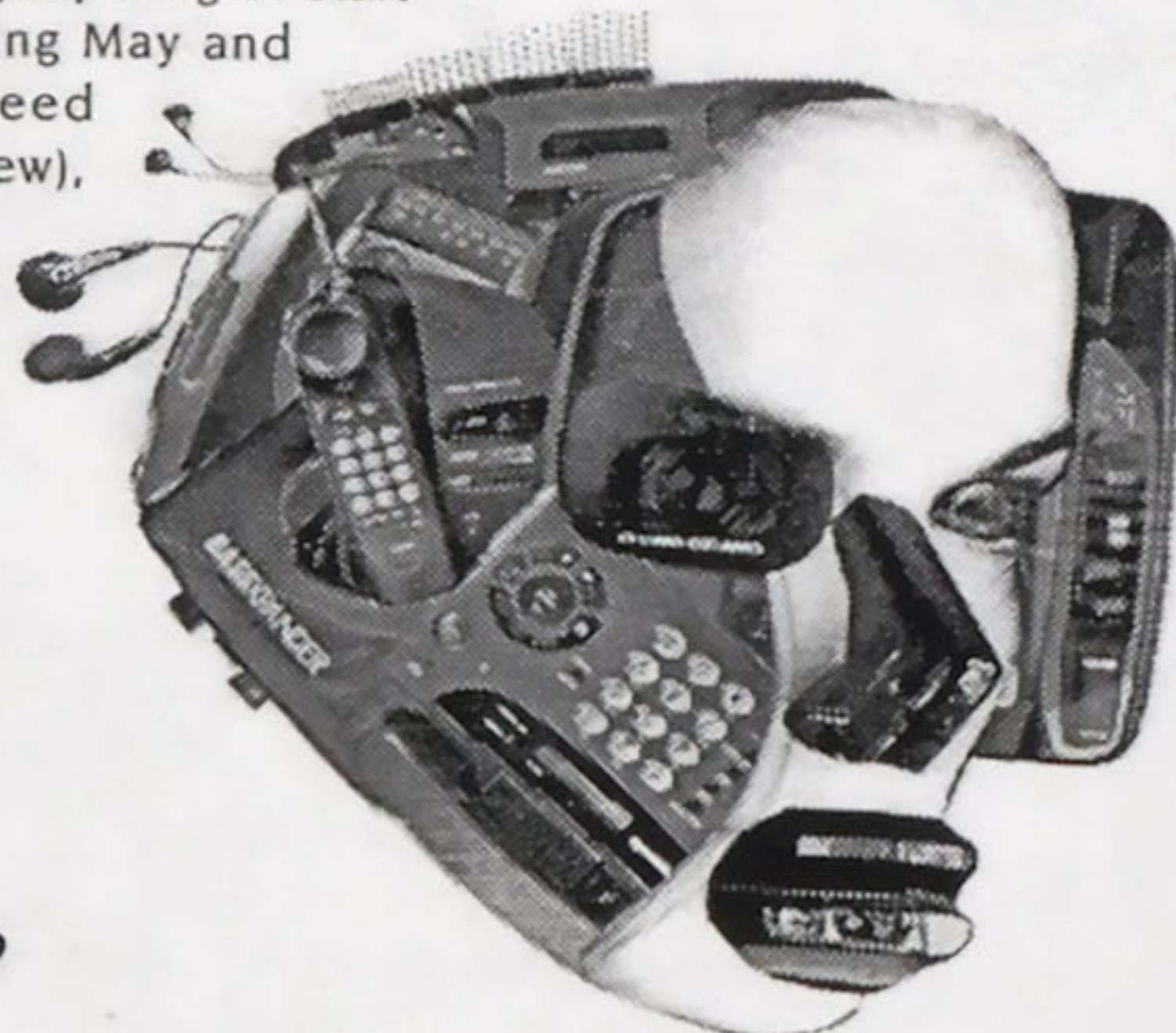
### Narrative

Sunday 11th  
12:00pm—4:00pm  
Tutor: Bill Mousoulis

1x4 hour session  
Cost: \$80 (\$30 for members)  
Pre-requisites: None

### Lighting the Set

Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th  
1:00pm—4:00pm  
Tutor: Heinz Boeck  
2x3 hour sessions  
Cost: \$130 (\$80 for members)  
Pre-requisites: Basic Camera Skills



# Best and Worst

**Gary O'Keefe.**

The MS8FG committee, meeting on Tuesday 16th Feb gave support to a proposal put up by myself to complete and present a programme of 'Best and Worst films' from the Open Screenings.

It will be screened in November and the committee decided against using a selection panel for each session, and instead invited me to select the films and present them as a curated or themed programme. I will therefore select approximately two films per month on a personal preference and supply the newsletter with short monthly reviews of each film.

I am interested in films that work well within the limitations of the gauge, that don't feel confined by it. Notions of best and worst serve merely as generic overlay or as critical tools and not as unqualified judgement.

From the March Open Screening I have selected 'Zoo' by Jake Wilson and 'The Broken Hearted' by Ian Handasyde. Zoo has the look of a first film and if that is so it could be a useful guide to other starters in its simplicity and elegant form. To a 70's Simon and Garfunkle song we follow a young mob around - you guessed it - the zoo. The various enclosures are a wild adventure for the telephoto as we trace back in time to the origins of Neuvo Rich, 'out there' modern upholstery fabrics and current de rigueur clubbing gear as the species prowl by. It's not until the guy in flares does a short dance for our Henri Rousseau on camera that the parameters shift and we find that we are observing just another very peculiar and hopelessly endangered little animal.

*The Broken Hearted* also follows a music narrative and Ian Handasyde has gone for a Jimmy Witherspoon R+B hit covered this time by Englishman Chris Farelowe from 1969. The film alternates between two young teenage girls, one is dancing in a modern style to the song in perfect sync., while the intercutting sequence is of a waifish street kid walking through a cold city night. Despite the thematic overkill (apparently roles were chosen by the two young people), this film is well made well enough to arouse the average romantic imagination with its soft ruffles, dark velvety tones and a pubescent innocence that is continually forced aside by unremitting grain that is the cities evil light. Cheesy melodrama or new romantic decadence? I can't decide.

# 16mm Proposal

**Dean Francis**

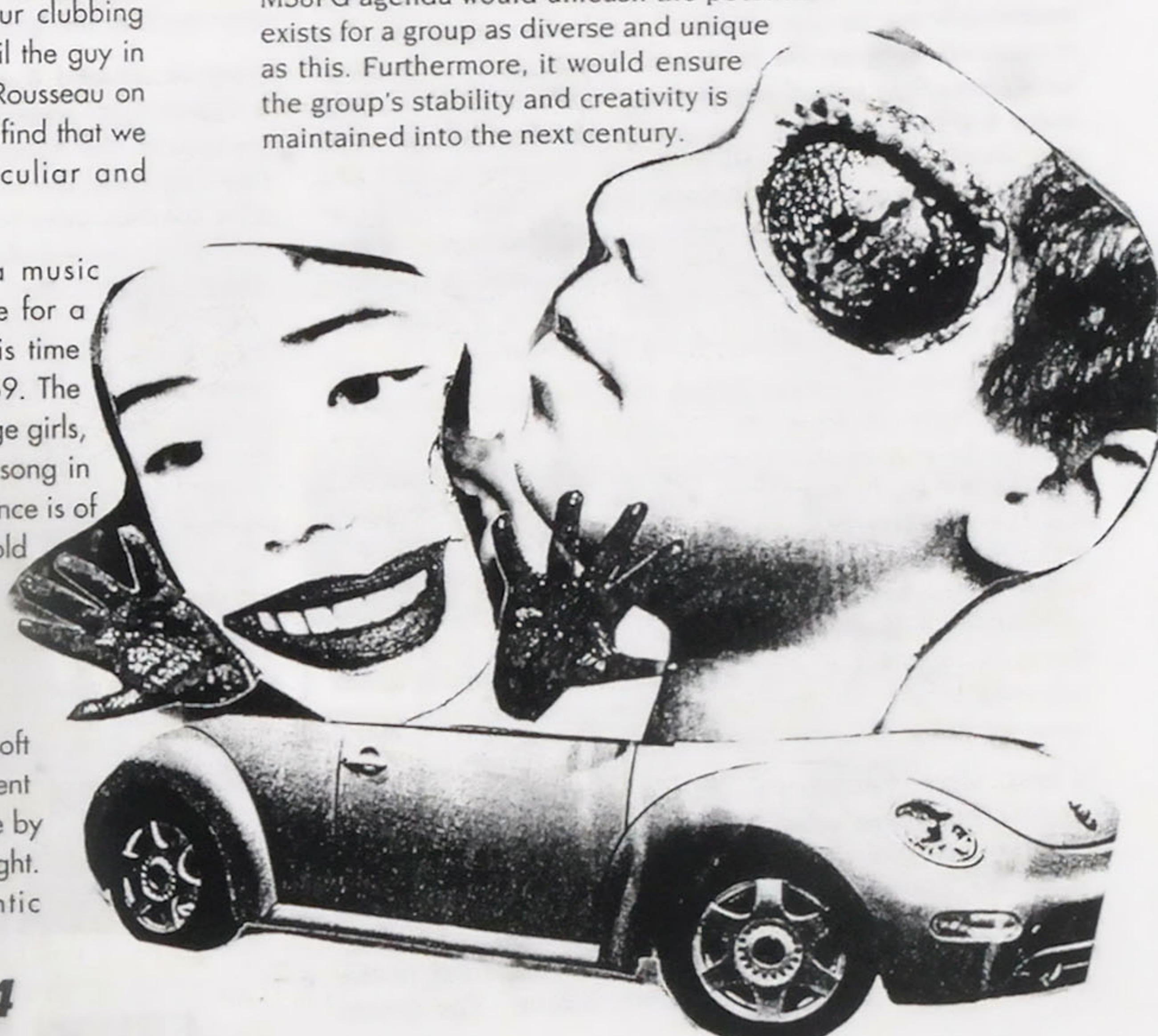
I write in support of Tony Wood's proposal that the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group accept films for screening on formats other than Super 8.

In particular, I feel that the group's acceptance of films screening on 16mm would greatly enhance the group's ability to foster emerging and existing screen culture and support independent and experimental film making.

In recent years, the production and distribution of Super 8 film stocks has diminished, which means fewer new film makers are choosing to shoot their early projects on Super 8, opting instead for 16mm, which is no longer significantly more expensive, and which makes available a wider range of stocks. The MS8FG serves an important function in creating an environment which serves new and established filmmakers sense of community. The embracing of 16mm would, I believe, enhance the group's ability to do this, thus significantly increasing the membership base.

The MS8FG is unique in that it presents filmmakers with a forum in which to moot new ideas (in any stage of progress) with absolutely no focus on competition or industry expectation. Personally, this was invaluable after the completion of my first film, *Cult of Beauty*, as the group gave me confidence to exhibit my work in more public and at times competitive situations here and around the world. The majority of my work since has been finished on 16mm (sometimes, however, with sections originating on Super 8), and I would value the opportunity to exhibit 'works in progress' in a forum as rich and varied as the MS8FG.

It is my feeling that the inclusion of other film formats in the MS8FG agenda would unleash the potential that we all know exists for a group as diverse and unique as this. Furthermore, it would ensure the group's stability and creativity is maintained into the next century.



# VANISHING ACT

Virginia Fraser

The February newsletter announced Paul Fletcher's March 7.30 screening for April, the notice for the film section of the EG was sent but mysteriously didn't make it into the paper, and the day before the screening, my disappearing address book with Paul's hard-to-get phone number disappeared again. Unannounced and unreminded, it would have been surprising if, that night, he had walked through the door of the Erwin Rado with his films under his arm.

A certain nervousness attended this radical non-appearance, and some rather Waiting for Godot-ish moments - calls between films of "Does anyone know Paul Fletcher?", and "Is Paul Fletcher here?", and stage-whispered questions during them - "Do you know what he looks like?," "Is that him?" as the door swung open in the dark admitting oblivious latecomers. But gradually as the open screening unfolded, what hadn't happened stopped mattering, supporting the contention that coincidental juxtapositions at open screenings can produce programs just as cohesive and interesting as planned ones.

## Three films

Three apparently (or almost) abstract films, Tony Woods' short *Light on white*, Steven Ball's *Personal Electronics*, and Moira Joseph's *Lost*, scratch animation on found footage, have formed themselves retrospectively in my memory into a thematic program suggesting more than met the eye and ear.

*Light on white* begins with white ripples in light grey water, smooth concentric ridges in soft focus sliding slowly and repeatedly out to the edges of a circular container. The soundtrack echoes the curves of the images - a muffled woody treadling sound suggesting a cylinder slowly rolling, and a foghorn, a melancholy aural equivalent of big round grey clouds. There is a vertical, planar moment as dots and dashes of soap suds slide down a sheet of glass. Finally, as the vessel containing the water is agitated faster and faster, the ripples reach a crescendo, a whirlpool effect, to heavy creaking and rolling and birds madly chirping. It is graceful, nervous and slightly ominous at the same time.

*Personal Electronics* (which Steven described as "avant-garde nostalgia and baroque electronica") moves suggestively backwards and forwards across the borderline between abstraction and urban landscape, blending electronically and photographically acquired images with a soundtrack including the unearthly (like a cosmic aeolian harp) and human (a woman's voice, a heartbeat-like thudding). It is full of hints, shadows, parts of images, flashes of colour in black and shades of grey, and perhaps proves a point opposite to the one he made in his article on the latest issue (no 91/92) of *Cantrills Filmnotes*.

In *Lost*, Moira has covered found footage with dynamic scratched lines, including some almost figurative passages featuring acrobatic verticals topped by loops. Everything about the lines - their crispness, vivacity, colours, and rhythms - seems completely alive and present, and much more alive than the found actuality film that rises to the surface between the lines from time to time. The filmed



images - including a rose, and two men in cloth hats and shorts with cameras stalking something on their haunches - seem remote, indistinct, like faded memories by contrast with the hand drawn marks.

## More films

Inside Moira Joseph's and Tegan Mel's affectionate and sentimental homage to their now deceased cat *Tiger* - socialised party cat in a birthday hat, cat in a santa cap, cat tied up in tinsel, cat strolling, cat napping, cat posing for family photos, thirteen yearly episodes using stills and film framed by animated intertitles - are some very un sentimental, one might say social realist moments. At one point, observant close-ups of the cat's face in sharp focus fill the screen - it looks, squeezes its eyes shut, opens them again - no longer somebody else's cute pet or hairy animated doll, but a curious, watchful creature, individual, graceful, vital. When, at the end of the film *Tiger* dies, on screen, a painfully ragged pyjama case-shaped bag of fur and bones struggling to wave for the camera one last time, it is a very unusual moment.

Gary O'Keefe's *4 1/2 minutes part two*, an exercise in using a fluid head tripod and special effects filter, was dedicated to Stanley Kubrick, also recently deceased, and used strange, wonky music like the soundtrack to a 1940s tourist film with industrial footage, rail tracks, city buildings, and cranes in the sky. The lens had the effect of multiplying objects, and then as it panned, swallowing up the multiples as though the images were mysteriously and gracefully slipping one after another out behind a slit partway across the frame.

Later he showed *Ray Cresswell*, a film dominated aurally by a monologue, recorded from the radio about an imagined time when the contents of people's brains, including their characters and personalities, will be etched into microchips (the speaker uses the example of an individual he often mentions called Ray Cresswell, which may him - Ray Cresswell this, Ray Cresswell that, Ray Cresswell lives forever). In one long scene, a teenage girl stares steadily at the camera with an almost unreadable expression combining scorn, stubbornness, and an implacable lack of interest. It reminds me of a cartoon I saw pinned to the notice board in an office. The little coloured picture showed three women perched on chairs in a row, as if in a schoolroom, opposite them a man wagging his finger saying: "Now I'll explain all the reasons why men make better astronauts than women." It's captioned "Space boredom simulator." They are funny in the same way.

And there was more.

**PAUL FLETCHER'S FILMS  
will screen at 7.30pm on  
TUESDAY APRIL 13, 1999  
at the  
ERWIN RADO THEATRE**

# Phoenix Park

A film by Moira Joseph

Colour—18 minutes, 1999

During six days in October/November 1998, a community adventure playground was built in Phoenix Park, East Malvern, Victoria. Apart from the construction consultants, all of the workforce was provided by approximately 1600 volunteers who worked day and night.

Everyone was allocated specific duties by team leaders and the ages of the helpers ranged between five and eighty years. The whole project brought together many local people along with shops and businesses donating food, beverages and construction materials.

Small tenets were set up near the building site with child minding facilities, souvenir goods, massage, clothing and food for sale.

As a film project I found it fascinating to document the changes in the playgrounds progress from bare ground to an amazing fairy castle-like construction. The film can also be viewed as historically significant, documenting progress in the City of Stonnington.

For the making of Phoenix Park, the camera was set up on a tripod and using an intervalometer, selected areas of the park were filmed in timelapse. Each timelapse segment of approximately seconds took about an hour to film. The stills in the film are from photographs taken by myself and David Mel.



Phoenix Park playground, East Malvern

## FEE INCREASES

### Membership Fees

At the Special General Meeting held before the March 9, 1999 Open Screening, a vote was taken in favor of raising membership fees.

These are now \$45 Full and \$30 Concession.

### Entry to Open Screenings

Prices for Open Screenings have now been set at \$3 for current MS8FG members and \$6 for non-members. These prices will take effect from the April Open Screening.

## S8 Classifieds

### For Sale:

Canon 310XL camera, single frame, 18fps  
Canon 518 auto zoom camera, 18 and 36 fps,  
2 lenses, case, manual.

Two standard and super 8 projectors, as new  
Hanimex E300 editor, as new Fujica splicer.

Also, Yashica standard 8/16mm camera with  
triple lense turret (F6.5, 10 and 25)

All VGC, make an offer.

Phone Helen: 03 9460 5838 (0414 785 492)

350 ft Plastic Reels and Cases, \$5

Phone Bill: 9376 2546

If you have something to sell or swap, or are looking to buy a piece of S8 gear, put it in the S8 classifieds. Line advertisements are \$3.00 for members, and \$5.00 for non-members.

## FILMPLUS

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## **Last Open Screening:**

**Tuesday 9th March 1999**

"Tiger"-Maira Joseph

1999, 14 mins, colour, 18fps, stereo cassette

"2nd 4.5 minutes"-Gary O'Keefe

1999, 4.5 mins, 18fps, stereo cassette

"Light on White"-Tony Woods

1999, 3 mins 20 seconds, 18fps, cassette

"Broken Hearted"—Ian Handasyde

1997, 5 mins, 24fps, soundstripe

"Personal Electronics"—Steven Ball

1998, 12 mins, 18fps, cassette sound

"Zoo"—Jake Wilson

1998, 2.5 mins, 24fps, cassette sound

"Ray Cresswell"—Gary O'Keefe

1999, 6 mins, 18fps, soundstripe

"Lost"—Maira Joseph

1997, 5 mins, 18fps, cassette sound

## **Next Open Screening:**

**Tuesday 13th April**

ERWIN RADO THEATRE

211 Johnston St Fitzroy

**7.30pm-Paul Fletcher films**

## **Followed by The Open Screening**

Byo take-up reels please

**ISSUE 144**

W e:<http://www.cinemedia.net/super8>  
email: [super8@netspace.net.au](mailto:super8@netspace.net.au)

# **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 \$45.00 / concession \$30.00/ overseas \$35.00**

**contact the group at the address below**

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This newsletter is published monthly by the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc. Contributions are welcome. © 1999 the individual authors & Melbourne Super 8 Film Group. Disclaimer: The opinions expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group. Library subscription to this newsletter is \$50 annually/\$60 overseas; other organisations \$35

**The Melbourne Super 8 Film Group is entirely self-funded. Donations and contributions are most welcome.**

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# **S8**

**SURFACE MAIL**



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