

Super Eight

Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc.
ISSUE 148 July 1999



POLYCHROME AND MONO

by Gary O'Keefe



Arnold West 1992 16 minutes (with
Deborah Warr)

Arnold West was filmed over three days on Deborah Warr's grandparent's wheat and cattle property at Arnold West, which is about 60 kms west of Bendigo. The film shifts between a typical S-8 holiday movie to a quasi-documentary about life for this old couple on the land, to something deeper I hope that speaks about the drought affected land as strange and unknowable—as if the dryness takes with it any possibility of us finding meaning in a landscape. I shot most of this film and collaborated with Deborah on the editing. Due to a faulty mic., much of the sound had to go on later, in fact it came from the audio library at Swinburne which in this case are sounds of the English countryside. Collaboration would account for this film's strengths—it was chosen to be part of 'Australian Focus' at a Week of Experimental Film in Madrid in 1994. The songs are Zydeco Gris Gris by Beausoleil and a Kurt Weill waltz. Thanks to Bill and Joyce Allen, Hannah and Billie O'Keefe and Damon, Natalia and Anita Toubourou.



Stills from Arnold West reprinted from Cantrill's Filmnotes.
Reprinted with permission

Zero Falls 1992 12 minutes

I wrote this about Zero Falls for 'Experimenta' in 1992. 'A camera glides smoothly across two backyards coming to rest facing the back door of a small dilapidated timber cottage. Inside, a girl tap dances on the kitchen table. Across the street a young woman stands at her front window and watches an old man go by, pulled by two large dogs and we follow him into the night. In another house, a hand traces the curves of a woman's body—it becomes a landscape and we travel on a caporeal artery to our final destination, Zero Falls'.

This film is about our neighborhood and plays with narrative structure—all characters are of equal importance to the story, their lives connect and overlap through the agency of the camera. These 'lived' lives merge into a fictitious neighborhood, which adds some authenticity to the fiction and sets the film hovering between fact and fiction, the real and imaginary. For the opening shot I made a kind of cradle for the camera suspended on a pulley device



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that runs along a length of wire cable that in this case was stretched across two back yards.

This film went on to tour with MIMA's Diversionary Tactics program, which screened in a number of major out of the way international venues and Aust. regional centres. Thanks to John Lees and his dogs and the beautiful Joe and Michele.

A Private Swimming Pool 1998 12 minutes

We have the same children from Arnold West six years on, as well as little Conor and his dog Robbie, living in far off Oakleigh. There is no swimming pool, just pools of germs and typical backyard decomposition. This film has had problems with some unsettling juxtapositions and I would agree that much of the rot and decay could be a bit obsessed and out of place among the quiet vicissitude of suburban family life. This is nevertheless a recent film and the closing chapter of my ten year saga of the family as transmogrifying and endlessly reshaping modern animal.

Taking the swimming pool as a central idea, set in a vast landscape of pools stretching out to the horizon, surrounded with paling fences, attached to interconnecting pipes and drains, pergolaed and lit with spots and candles like a modern suburban temple—I did not however, manage to film one—I don't think I needed to. The opening song is Germ Free Adolescence by X Ray Specs, then Love Letters by Kitty Lester from Blue Velvet. The film ends with The Honeymoon Song (1963), released recently on The Beatles BBC tapes.

Fluid Head 1999 4 minutes.

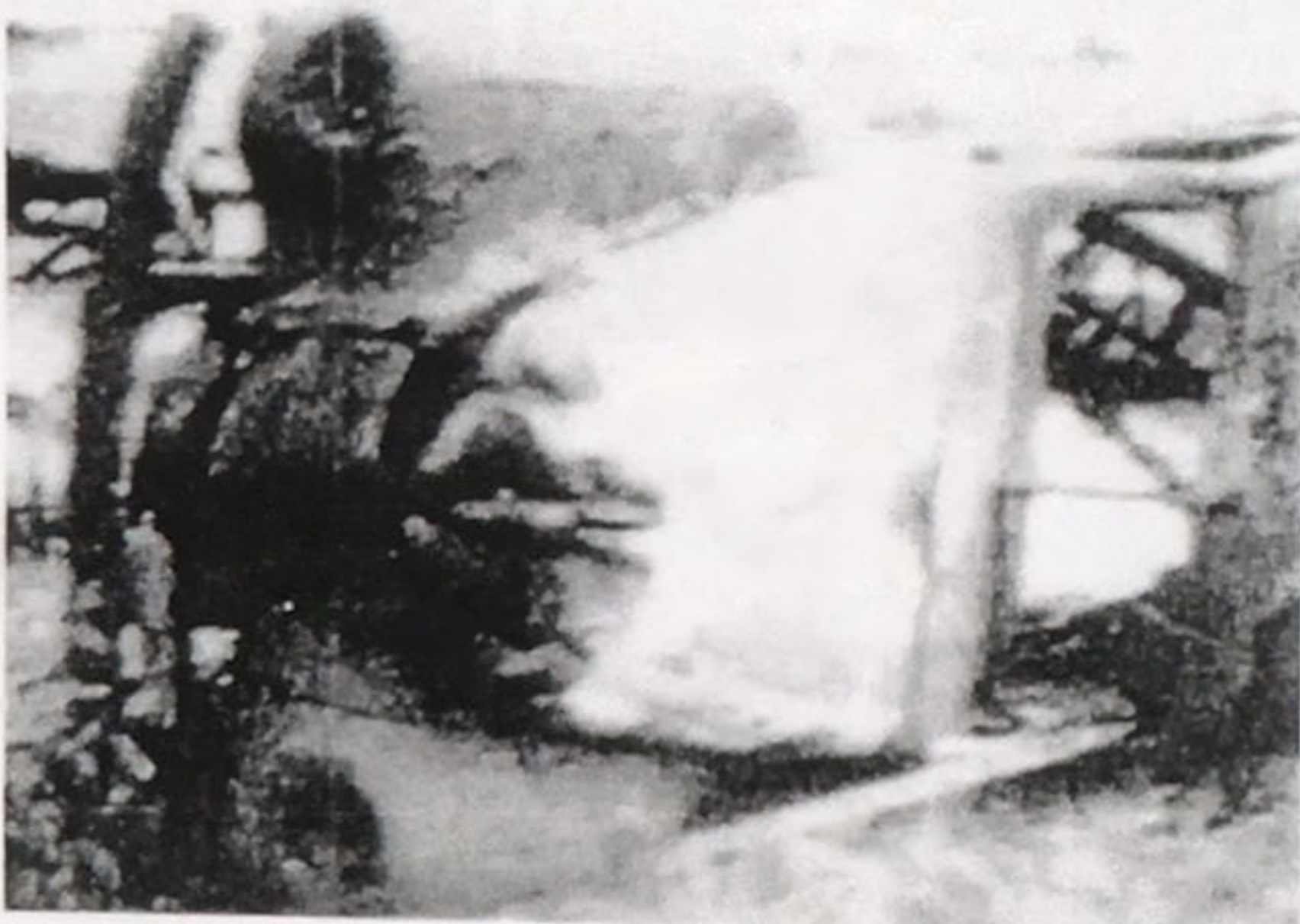
As the title suggests, this short piece employs the over used tripod accessory as well as a lens attachment with a segmented, prism like surface. The location is the wasteland between Spencer St and North Melbourne railway stations and I would like to think this film suggests wonder despite its reliance on a technical explanation. The suitably cheesy music is from the film 'The Natural' by Randy Newman.

Night Portico 1999 5 minutes

Portico employs an optical technique used for the flower petal sequences in 'Swimming Pool', only this is filmed at night around Spencer and King Streets. This effect of columns of light is achieved by cupping in the hand, a piece of flexible plastic mirror and holding it against the lens, and facing the distorted surface out at about 90 degrees. I hold everything very still—and the moving lights do it all.

Ray Cresswell 1999 6 minutes

Ray Cresswell is a computer scientist and writer who I knew nothing about until I recorded him speaking to Racheal Cohn one night on Radio National. He sounded authoritative and detached yet warm and reassuring. The images in the film tend to lead his narrative astray—they rub against the other and result in surreal associations, more fictional than scientific, as if this future is already with us. It closes with a segment of Puccini, sung by the wonderful Maria Callas. This was made with my last few rolls of sound film, it is now out of stock, and I feel that this last shot is the one I've been looking for these ten or more years. Thanks to Heather Grant and her cousin Kenny—and again Hannah.



Welcome to New Members:

MS8FG welcomes new members James Grant-Hay and Paul Smith. These new members have joined the group during April/May.

Open Channel

Open Channel have now offered the group a number of options, these include:

- office space for less than half what we are currently paying at MIFF.
- a joint equipment hire facility which should ensure a higher profile and hire frequency for the group's equipment.
- collaboration in the running of workshops (as well as a suitable venue)
- development of a comprehensive resource kit providing information on suppliers, servicing, printing and video transfer services.
- there is also the possibility of recognition of each organisation's memberships and additional equipment hire discounts for people who are members of both organisations—this is yet to be approved by the Open Channel Board.

The committee will be discussing this proposal in full at the next meeting, with particular attention to be paid to the implications for the Open Screening.

Publicity and Sponsorships:

Simon Underwood from Victoria University of Technology's Public Relations course has begun working on a focussed publicity campaign for the group, with a focus being on establishing publicity contacts for the festival.

We are in the process of identifying businesses we can approach for advertising and/or sponsorship. It would be appreciated if members could contact the office (via fax/phone/email or post) with details of businesses that have anything to do with the film trade ie: camera suppliers/repairers, processing labs, film stock suppliers, peripherals suppliers (reels etc), facilities/equipment hire and so on.

Meetings

MS8FG Committee Meeting

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

Festival Planning Meetings

Held on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 6:30pm in the group's offices.

Classifieds Advertisements:

Any members wishing to advertise for the sale, swap or purchase of film equipment please contact the office for details.

Festival:

Preparations for the festival are now well underway. The Sun Theatre has been booked for November 19-20. Sponsors, guests and various sources of funding have been contacted and we are hoping to make a funding submission shortly.

Get your films on the ABC...

RecoveryTV is calling for submissions from young film makers to go on a segment of the program and talk about their film.

VHS copies as well as a brief bio should be addressed to:

Marea Markou
Recovery
ABC-TV
GPO Box 9994
Melbourne 3001

paintings and drawings

by Ivor Cantrill

ROAD STUDIOS

**115A Brunswick St Fitzroy—
Exhibition Runs 13th to 25th July
Gallery Closed Mondays**

Opening Night—

6:00pm, Tuesday 13th

July

VIDEO & FILM

by Rad Rudd.

I didn't refer to the article as "Video vs Film" because I don't see the two mediums, at least artistically, as competitors.

For those capturing important family events (secretly hoping that a dancing, drunken groom slips and falls into the in-laws, dragging the bride down with them as he tries to balance himself, thus completing a near fatal, nevertheless "Funny", award-winning home video) the home video camera is, without doubt, the only tool for the job.

Many of these aficionados would at the mention of Super-8, likely retort with, "That's Hi-8 my dear fellow!"

The home video camera is, now, what the Super-8 camera was in its halcyon day. Video technology has also captured a portion of the television market. Blue Heelers & Frontline are examples of television shows that would once have been shot on film.

The television studio camera has, of course, been used since the beginning of television. It is the technology that gave birth to the home video camera, logically (logically = don't quote me on that).

Video technology has also captured a slice of the movie market. Two productions come to mind - Redball & Dust Off The Wings - both shot on Digital Video & transferred to film.

These changes from film to video technology were made for these reasons;- affordable video cameras (relatively as affordable as Super-8 cameras were in the 60's & 70's), much cheaper 'stock' (3hrs hi-fi video tape=\$15(approx.), 1hr hi-fi Dvtape=\$50(approx.)),

3 mins S8 film averages \$25.), instant results (this factor saves time because the camera can be adjusted for the conditions on the spot as opposed to possibly weeks later when the processed film returns), inexpensive & multiple dubs, ease of editing & re-editing, ease of sound recording, & the camera's 'user-friendly' (lovely combination of words) special effects.

The home video aficionado, the television production company, the film production company, &, more importantly here, the independent film maker have all been attracted to or inquired about the obvious cost savings made by converting from film technology to video technology.

WHY DO WE STILL USE FILM!?

Why did I use large lettering?

To the latter I answer: to add a smidgen of eye-catching controversy.

We still use film because the conversion to video is inspired by simplicity & cost savings NOT by improved picture quality.

The audience for the home video aficionado's footage is the family; Frontline isn't cinematic but it relied on script and characters; Dust Off The Wings & Redball put (for their cost savings) movies into theatres that would otherwise never have reached a wide audience (sure, some would say they shouldn't have). To communicate the ideas in each of these particular genres an adequate image is all that was required and so video technology was employed.

And it is only an adequate image. No one says, "That's beautiful!" referring to a video image.

Only with Digital Video can it's pure image have some aesthetic appeal. Even this, however, when projected onto a large screen, emits a certain '9-volt-battery-to-the-tongue' effect, visually speaking of course. [Even the Phantom Menace (should that be the Fund'em (II & III) Monies {Spanish Version}?) with the latest digital special effects, has that 9-volt-..you know what I mean, in many instances.)

The number of pixels and their tonal range cannot outnumber or out-do celluloid's grains. (re digital special effects - the complexity of natural light and natural movement will always be superior to any digital creation).

To extract the fullest impact from the big screen, whether at the Rado or the Multiplex, the most important factor is, most often, an aesthetically powerful image & ONLY FILM TECHNOLOGY CAN DELIVER AN

16 at The Sun

The August Open Screening will be held at The Sun Theatre, 8 Ballarat Street, Yarraville.

7:00pm Soundscapes by

7:30pm 16mm films by Craig Lindley, Dean Francis, Virginia Fraser, Gary O'Keefe, Michael Brain ?????, and will also feature 3013 from Postcodes.

Followed by the Open Screening. Films for the Open Screening can be submitted on either Super 8 or 16mm.

AESTHETICALLY POWERFUL IMAGE ON THE BIG SCREEN.

Additionally, however, and seeing as I am about to shoot a 20 min video production for the small screen myself (which will, hopefully, be of such quality that it won't be given two weeks to get out of town), I will say that, artistically, video is a visual medium in it's own right. It will be used more often to make 'films'. What they will lack in pure visual power can, & should, be made up for in script, characters, & special effects.

In conclusion, and as a member of the MS8FG, I am not advocating that we become the MS8FVG. That idea deserves nothing but the tip. My feeling is that video productions belong on the small screen. However, until the home video camera is accompanied by the home television broadcasting station, or until everyone has their pentium III on the net, projecting video onto a big screen seems the only way for it to reach a wider audience. And so I am advocating the occasional video screening incorporated into the monthly open screening, providing it is a unique occasion (is it not wise to see what the enemy are doing?). Of course, this seems to be the current view of the MS8FG - a group that I appreciate being a part of &, unfortunately, a group that some of us, myself included, take for granted.

CONVERGENCE

a series of four forums throughout 1999, is co-presented by Experimenta Media Arts and OPENChannel.

The series of four forums brings together leaders in artistic, cultural and technological innovation to take collective stock of how far we've come and just how far is it that we're likely to end up?

Coming Soon

3. Fusion of Technologies
August 26
technology, attitude and interdisciplinary arts practice
4. Simulation Culture
October 21
cyber war, VR blurring fact with fiction

We need submissions for this publication. Don't let your newsletter become choked with advertisements and text that is **twice the size it needs to be**. Write an article on a film you've seen, a new trick you've learned. We also need a volunteer to answer questions that come to the office via phone/fax/email re tips and techniques, processing, telecine, supplies and servicing.

PURPOSE DESIGNED COMPOSITIONS AT SOUND LIBRARY PRICES

Enhance Sound Production is currently expanding its sound library and is giving you the opportunity to have Royalty Free Music Composed for your production at the price you would normally pay for stock music.

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Melbourne Univeristy Gets Down with MS8

by Dean Francis

A Revolution is brewing at Melbourne University. Kind of a quiet one, not the sort of thing you'd first notice unless you were in the Union Cinema or one of the Undergraduate Lounges of a Friday evening when the Filmmakers Association holds its screening sessions. Students and others sit on couches and drink beer and eat popcorn while they watch films people have made and brought along. Anything. Experimental, narrative, animation, Super 8, 16mm, video. Sometimes people ask questions afterwards. There's an amazingly relaxed vibe. Most of the questions are technical, most of the questioners are upcoming filmmakers.

Film has been touted as the art form of the post-x generation as people's visual vocabularies come to surpass their verbal ones. Short films are common-place. Short film is everywhere. The new image-based language, born of old as a bastion of consumerism becomes gradually reappropriated into is a highly personal but utilitarian form of expressionism.

So it's hardly surprising that everyone at Uni wants to make films. Or watch them. Or watch them getting made. That's why there's a small, under-funded organisation called the Melbourne University Filmmakers Association (MUFA). We promote and facilitate the production of film by students. We hold monthly screenings, which are based on the concept of the Melbourne Super 8 Group's screenings, only we accept any format, and we have beer (hey, we're students after all). We hold special events such as short film premiers. Our last one was a grunge rock-opera in drag called Dysposia, made by students over the summer. We also

publish Sprocket, our low-fi newsletter, which is distributed to the public and to which we invite the public to contribute. This month we're running an article on the Melbourne Super 8 Group.

At a time when the Super 8 Group is looking for new directions to take, (and new members to recruit), and the Melbourne University Filmmakers Association is looking for participation by more experienced filmmakers, it's feasible that this could be the beginning of a beautiful relationship.

MUFA is holding a screening of Melbourne Super 8 Group films as part of it's MUDfest Chisell Cinema Series. Filmmakers include Heinz Boeck, Christos Linou, Moira Joseph, Irene Proebsting and Barry Brown, Gary O'Keefe and Deborah Warr, Matthew Rees, Steven Ball, Ooni Peh, Tony Woods and Craig Lindley. The program will screen twice on Friday August 13 at 5:30 pm and on Tuesday August 17 at 1pm in the Union Cinema, University of Melbourne, Parkville. Entry is \$3 (\$2 Melbourne Super 8 Group and MUFA members) and you'll be able to meet the Filmmakers Association and, hopefully the filmmakers themselves.

Other MUDfest film events include a screening of low-budget and experimental student works which will screen on Wednesday August 11 at 1pm and Friday August 20 at 6pm at the Union Cinema. There will also be a separate screening of VCA films at Cinema Nova.

MUFA's Film Festival, Watch My Shorts is now calling for entries under 30 minutes on any format. There is a special non-competitive section of short films completed for under \$5,000. The deadline is August 20 and entry forms can be obtained from <http://www.jjsplice.com.au> or by phoning 9517 9347.

Membership of MUFA is open to all, and more details can be obtained from <http://www.jjsplice.com.au/MUFA> or by email: MUFA@jjsplice.com.au or on 9517 9347.

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instruction manual

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phone John Pinto on 9386 3372

Super 8 Film making at the CAE:

Tutored by Moira Joseph
Begins Tuesday July 20th

5:30pm—7:30pm

6 weeks plus a 3 hour location
shoot.

Covers all aspects of Super 8 Film making

Enquiries: Susan Watson 9652 0668

A Photographic Exhibition by members of MS8FG

I know that we have many fine photographers in our midst, so I thought why not suggest an exhibition of photos in a gallery; I mentioned this to Virginia Fraser who thought the concept worthy of development. SO why not put your minds to the idea, and talk to either of us at the next Open Screening. If there is enough interest we may be able to put thoughts into action in the near future.

T.W.

Got your own ideas on the direction of the group and where it should be headed?

Look in next month's edition for details of a workshop for ideas and strategies the group can put into action to ensure we continue beyond 1999.

Eliminate copious amounts of white space...

write something to fill it...

...please?

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ENQUIRIES Ph (03) 9306 1842

Last Open Screening:

Tuesday 8th June 1999

Pollywoodside—Ian Poppins

1975–1999, 8 mins 10 secs, 18fps, soundstripe

Colin Cook—David Kuszniir

1997, 2 mins 30 secs, 18fps, soundstripe

Corpus Tango—Fiona Symington

1999, 4 mins 30 secs, 18fps, stereo cassette

Main Lane mainline—Tony Woods

1997, 25 mins, 18fps, stereo cassette

Breif Encounters—Heinz Boeck

1999, 10 mins, 24fps, silent

Untitled—Luke Scholes

1999, 4 mins 30 secs, 18fps, stereo cassette

Next Open Screening:

Tuesday 13th July

ERWIN RADO THEATRE

211 Johnston St Fitzroy

7.30pm-Films by Gary O'Keefe

**Soundscape: Indie Pop Music by
Cheezlekane and Cyan**

Followed by The Open Screening

Byo take-up reels please

ISSUE 148

website: <http://www.cinemedia.net/super8>

email: 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 (Aus)
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.**

Super Eight

S8

**SURFACE
MAIL**



ISSN 1039-5288

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