

# Super Eight

*Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc.*

*ISSUE 151 October 1999*



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## **FESTIVAL '99**

Well, we've been talking about it for the better part of a year now, and we've had occasional meetings for the past six months where we've talked a lot about what we thought we wanted and didn't want for the idea of a festival. Between the various other hurdles thrown up at the group during the past nine months we kind of plodded along, but didn't really get a lot down on paper.

All of a sudden September landed and we realised we'd better get something together. The festival is now shaping up quite well. We've gained a number of sponsors—not counting The Sun Theatre—including Maribyrnong City Council and eatcarpet.

We're basically aiming the festival in three key directions. Many new filmmakers (and established ones) have a tendency to screw up their noses when they hear the words 'Super 8', in the belief that it doesn't have any input in the professional arena. The opening night's program is geared towards countering many of those myths with a program of films by a number of filmmakers who have begun their professional careers in Super 8 and moved on to a combination of gauges and formats.

The primary focus of the festival will remain however, as one of showcasing new film works by local, national and international filmmakers. These will be programmed into several short sessions, usually an hour in length, that will highlight specific qualities of the gauge.

At the conclusion of the festival, we are running a competition program, similar to what many other festivals tend to run. SBS eatcarpet are sponsoring this program, and will select one film from those in the final round (ie: the selected program), which they will buy the broadcast rights for. They will pay \$100 per minute. This film will then be

broadcast later in 2000, with several repeat screenings a distinct possibility.

We are also presently negotiating with Moonlight Cinema for a program of films sselected from the festival to be scheduled as part of the 1999/2000 Moonlight program.

Enclosed in this newsletter you'll find an entry form. As a member, this is your opportunity to show your films to an audience much larger than the MS8FG. The festival will be promoted heavily in Melbourne, as well as around Australia and several other countries including Brazil, France, and Canada.

We're expecting entries from all of these countries, and there has been a lot of interest from overseas. Several of our members are already in contact with overseas filmmakers, requesting films to be submitted for the festival programs.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in submitting a film, even if you're not, we ask that you contact them and let them know, as the success of this year's festival, will undoubtedly determine the support we gain for one in 2000.

Maribyrnong's Big West Festival are going to include us as part of their program, making us part of an even larger publicity and promotion campaign, and we will also be promoted on the Sun Theatre's next program mailout, which is delivered to 28 000 homes in the Western suburbs.

Now is your chance to show the rest of the group what you've all been up to.

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### **In this issue**

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***Best and Worst***

***The future of the MS8FG... committee members for 2000 needed!***

***Virginia Fraser reviews the September O/S***

***earn quick cash***

***developments incl. Open Channel and Super 8 online.***

## New Members:

MS8FG welcomes new members Sharon Bartholomeusz-Reid, Sam Nicholson, Dave Kearney and Andrew Jaques, who joined the group during August/September.

## New funding possibilities:

In our efforts to scrounge funding for the festival, we've stumbled across a couple of opportunities that can benefit the group. The first is in the possible purchase of a new computer. Arts Victoria have a program of funding schemes, one of which provides up to \$5000 for organisations such as ours to upgrade their IT equipment. Being that the group's MAC is now more than a little tired, and still technically on loan from the AFC, we'll be pursuing this opportunity with some vigor.

The other funding opportunity comes from the Yarra Council, which provide up to \$1000 for an event being staged within their boundaries. This funding will be sought to ensure we are able to stage and promote the Open Screenings.

## Resources and Information:

We're trying to put together a comprehensive listing of businesses that sell stock and equipment, provide repair services for cameras/projectors etc., telecine and post-production facilities and services. It'd be appreciated if all members could forward details of the businesses/individuals they frequent for supplies/servicing so that we can provide detailed and accurate information to all members.

## Looking for actors?

Any members wanting actors for their films, contact George Ivanoff by mobile on 0417 597 828.

## Internet:

A new website for the group went live on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>. This is now pretty much a final draft, and will be updated fortnightly. It now features comprehensive information on the group, its activities and with the new membership profiles, its members. The idea behind the membership profiles is to provide visitors (and the group) with a thumbnail of the diversity of interests within the group. Each month the site will also include a featured filmmaker, which will go into a little more detail about one member, and wherever possible include samples of their work, together with a downloadable Quicktime movie of one of their films (provided the featured member has a video transfer). The digitising of the video is done at Open Channel, who allow us to use their off-line edit suites for this purpose free of charge during downtime.

The next step with the website is to enable e-commerce, allowing visitors to join/renew their membership over the internet, as well as the development of an online store, selling a range of film stocks. We're also looking at importing 35mm remanufactured into Super 8 format from Super8 Sound in the US, depending on what the exchange rate does to the price. These films are available as both tungsten and daylight balanced and range from 40ASA to 800ASA. They're also a negative stock, but the price includes processing and telecine to VHS.

## Workshop Employment Opportunity:

Any members interested in putting together and tutoring workshops on DIY Telecine, Optical Printing and any other advanced technical workshops should contact the office on 9417 3402, or Ben Ryan on 9326 3954. These will be part of the proposed program run in association with Open Channel and will pay \$35/hour.

## Open Channel:

As a result of the Planning Meeting, the committee has come to the decision to remain where we are for now. Although a move to Open Channel would've meant the group could halve its rental expenses, there were several major concerns:

- parking in that area of Fitzroy is almost non-existent, and the parking that does exist has a two hour limit.
- the Open Channel studio, which would be used for the Open Screening if we moved there, is not set up as a screening venue, it was felt that this would add further pressure to attendances at the Open Screening
- with the reduction of rent would come a reduction in available office space, which given the amount of equipment and archives the group possesses, would cause a problem.
- the future location of Open Channel beyond the expiry of their current lease is unclear.

It was felt that these issues outweighed the benefits of moving, considering the group has essentially stabilised financially. A concerted effort will now be made to ensure a solid, cohesive workshop program is set up, cross-promotion of activities and events being run by both organisations will be pursued, equipment hire and referrals will continue, and all members of the MS8FG are eligible for a 15% discount on equipment hire at Open Channel.

The plan is to see where this first step leads us, the hope is that it will generate a bit of cross-fertilisation between the two groups. In 2001, it will hopefully be looked at again when Open Channel's location, and indeed the MS8FG's future is a little more certain.

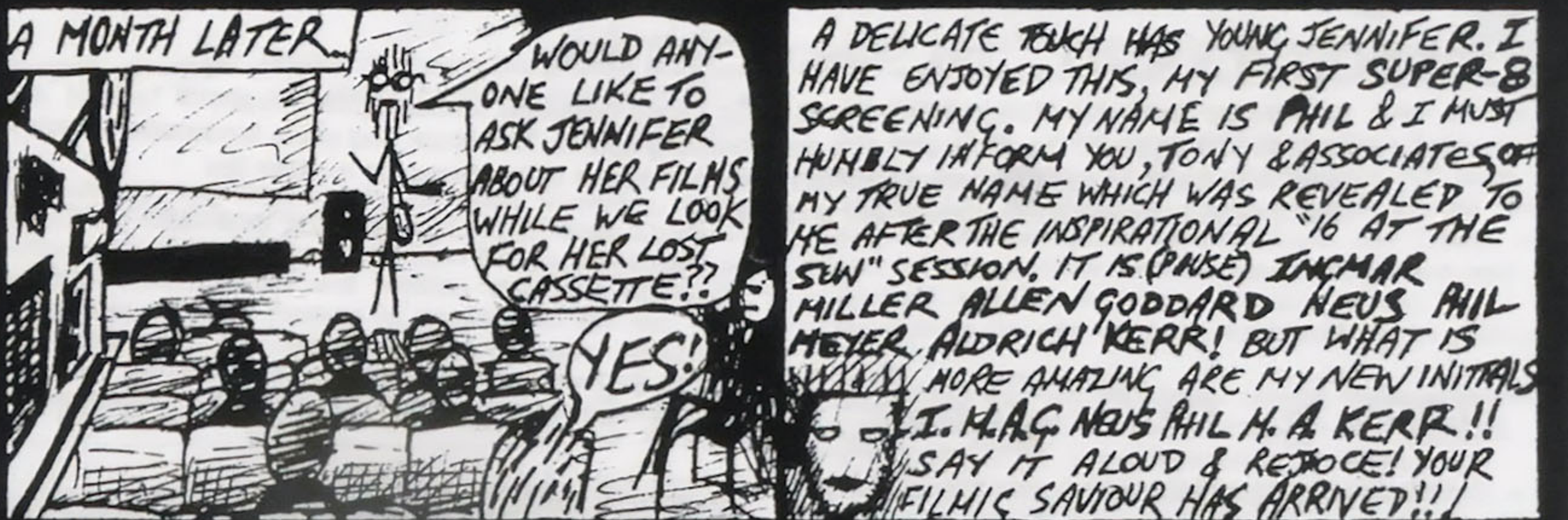
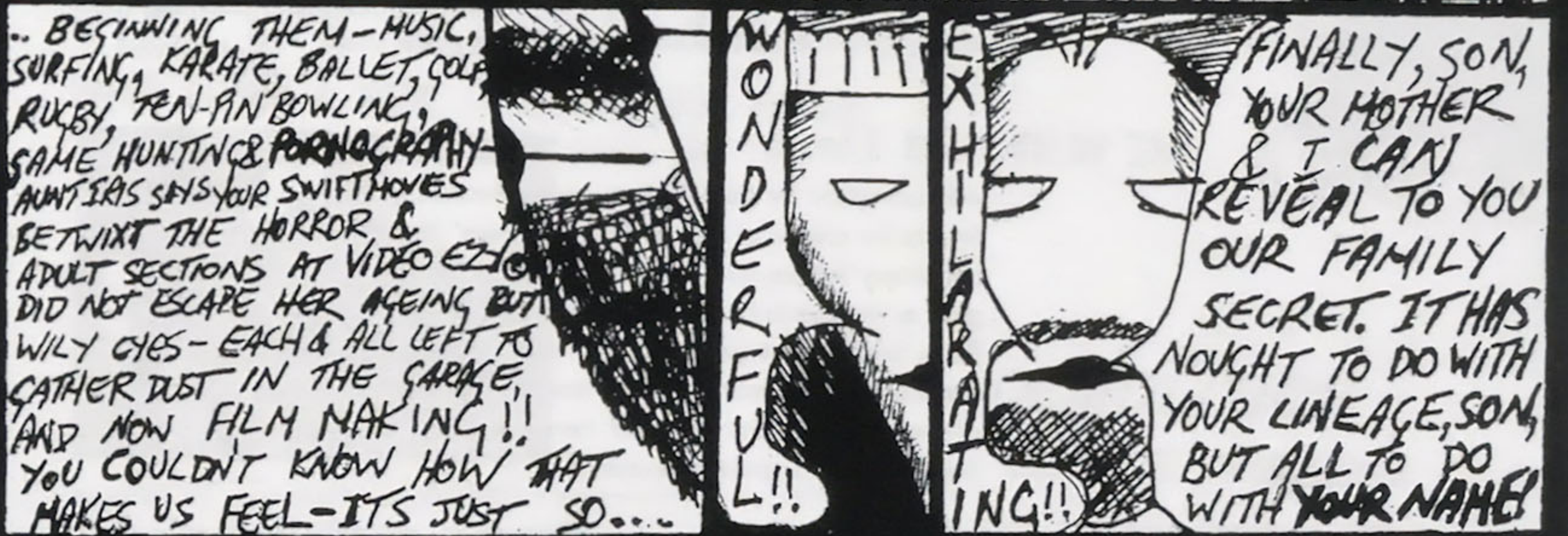
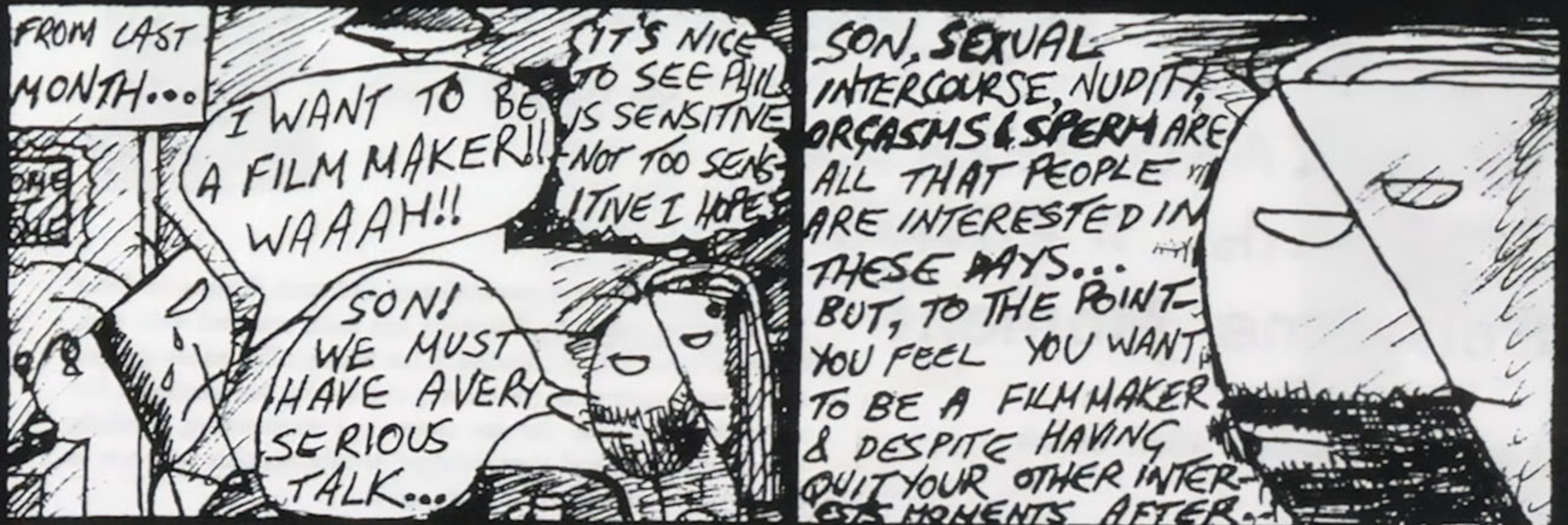
## November Open Screening

The November Open Screening has been cancelled due to its proximity to the Festival. The next Open Screening will be the December AGM and Open Screening, to be held at the Erwin Rado Theatre.

# THE ADVENTURES OF PHIL KERR: EPISODE II

THE EPISODE WITH MORE WORDS THAN IMAGES. UN-CUT! MAY CONTAIN SEX SCENES & FOUL LANGUAGE!!

**R 18+**



HOW WILL THE MSBFG REACT TO THIS MONUMENTAL FIND? IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY GUESSED, TUNE IN NEXT MONTH TO FIND OUT. OOH!! I CAN'T WAIT!!

NEXT OPEN SCREENING — Tuesday Oct 12

# the beSt and worSt

of The Open Screenings

By Gary O'Keefe



ERWIN RADO THEATRE  
211 Johnston St. Fitzroy

## Selfsame Moment

DUNKAN GRANT 1998 3mins

Bold manipulation and stark dualities confront S-8 audiences regularly. Emulsion has been attacked with acid, drowned in buckets of chlorine, it has been graffitied and gouged and abused in every imaginable way. A stabbing was inevitable. For some this is a balm for the clever and meandering, carefully measured feelings and over indulged sensibilities that suffocate as in the guise of creativity? G.O.K

Interesting changes in place and time. helped by a heavy and grinding guitar track. Rod Paterson

## ZOO

JAKE WILSON 1998 2.5mins

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. G.O.K



## CORPUS TANGO FIONA SYMINGTON 1999 4mins

Inspired by the music of Astor Piazzolla, Corpus Tango combines photographic images of inner Melbourne with the silhouette of a male dancing figure. This black and white landscape plays with ideas of cultural memory, corporeality and space in its attempt to explore the relationship between bodily movement and the city.

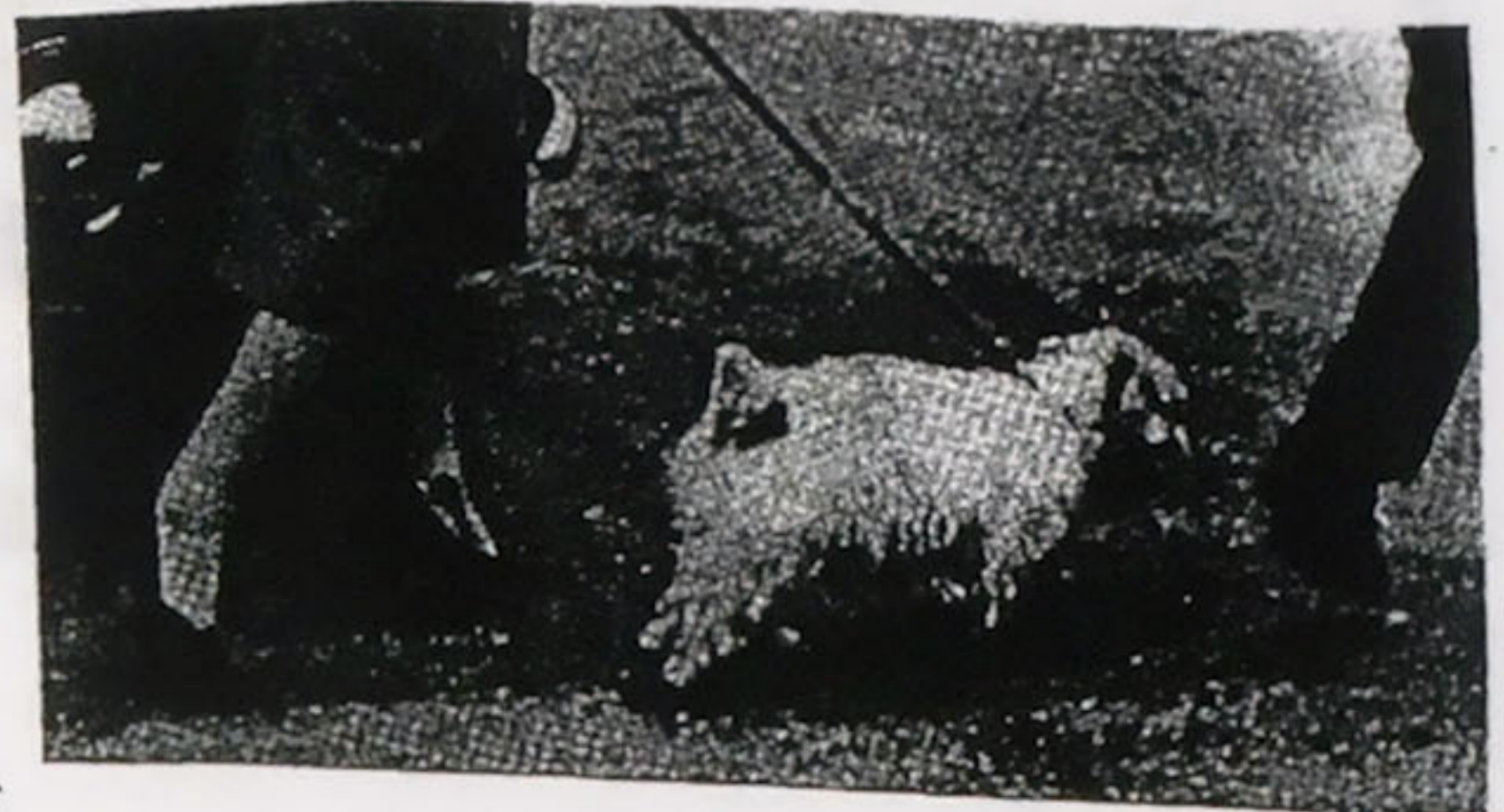
Fiona Symington

## Jock's Big Adventure

JAY ROBINSON 1999 2.5mins

probably spying another cat across the road, runs under a semi-trailer and we watch as he is dragged and bounced along the road.

This scene obviously raises serious ethical questions about the treatment of animals in popular entertainment. A more humane way to "kill" Jock might have been to substitute the live dog at some point for a stuffed copy or use a homeless stand-in from the lost dogs home, but then a filmmaker can't be expected to think of everything, especially on her first film.



G.O.K

## THE BROKEN HEARTED

IAN HANDASYDE 1997 5mins Despite the thematic overkill (apparently roles were chosen by the two young people), this film is 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. GOK



## STILL LIFE WITHOUT ORANGES

BARRY BROWN & IRENE PROBSTING 1998 7.5mins



as much as . you can't . squeeze your soul .  
or rub your sin . like fashion . in single file .

Refilmed video imagery—glassy and globular, fluctuating energy fields or 2 glass fish kissing? Dense soundtrack continues rich in Baroque texture...

jimbridges

(Speaking of soundtracks: In the Open Screening, Irene Proebsting and Barry Brown's "Still life Without Oranges" picked up an electrifying charge from Barry's soundscape of inhuman hums, drones and rumbles over a mysteriously juxtaposed actuality footage of people and the sea, film made abstract by overexposure, dynamic computer patterns, refilming, and shadows; even a shot of people running for a ferry seemed positively spooky and dangerous.

Virginia Fraser

## DEMOLITION

BILL ELLIOT 1999 10mins

The film that perhaps struck me most, was Bill Elliot's *Demolition*.

Piece by piece the building comes apart as if it were a giant Lego assembly. With an increase in the rate of descent, so too does the pace of the film. Jump cuts and timelapse take on a sense of urgency as Bill shifts his POV with increasing frequency. Shadows sneak across the ground, creeping up on the final few floors of the tower as CATs armed with jackhammers and hydraulic claws make short work of the remaining blocks of home destined to be rubble.

The significance of these towers being removed comes sharply into focus through a number of quick shots of locals peering through the temporary fencing, somewhat bewildered that a landmark - albeit an ugly one - is disappearing from their landscape.

by Ben Ryan



# IS MS8FG Y2K COMPLIANT?

It's coming up on a year since the AFC pulled our funding, and what has undoubtedly been one of the most difficult periods for the group in recent times has thrown up some significant challenges. Faced with the very real prospect of liquidation at the beginning of the year, the committee, and the group, have made some pretty major changes in the way we operate.

The much criticised move to almost double membership fees and increase entry fees at the Open Screening has essentially stabilised the group. In doing this, we've been able to then explore other opportunities that can decrease our overheads, and keep the group in a healthy financial situation. This has resulted in a fantastic opportunity for the group emerging in the proposed move to Open Channel, which while, the move there has essentially been put on ice, it seems destined to open up a range of opportunities for experimentation with other media forms, cheap equipment hire and even industry employment opportunities for members.

Some members have come forward and helped the group out, either in the form of volunteer work, or in the case of MGS, the provision of a venue for our screenings and festival. Rob MacLennan lives in Shepparton but has still helped the group enormously by doing our financial reports for 1997/98 and 1998/99 for free, which would normally have cost the group at least \$900.

Initiatives taken by Tony Woods and Gary O'Keefe in the 16mm program at The Sun Theatre, and the forthcoming 'Best and Worst' program, have ensured there is a degree of diversity in the types of films we show, together with a commitment to encouraging emerging filmmakers to exhibit their work. Both of these elements I think, are vital to ensuring the group can continue to develop and ensure continuance of truly independent filmmaking. Then there are other ventures such as the proposed photographic exhibition, and the opportunities for joint ventures with Open Channel in the exhibition of new media, as well as planned screenings of standard 8, video and 35mm films—all serving the purpose of demonstrating a diversity of interests and abilities that only this group seems able to boast.

The festival is shaping up to be a major showcase for the group and the gauge, which should provide us with some much needed exposure to the wider community, as well as showing a great range of films. The partnership with The Sun has ensured we are able to stage the festival at a greatly reduced cost, in a venue that ensures the films can be presented in a manner that is professional, and of a high quality. We have also recently reached agreements with the Maribyrnong City Council, who are co-financing the event, and Eat Carpet, who now seem interested in looking to the group on regular occasions for material to be programmed on the show. Cinemedia are very eager to contribute resources to the festival—though the political situation in Victoria may stymie that at present—and the AFC has demonstrated a softer attitude to the idea of the festival now that we have additional funding sources.

Redevelopment of the group's website is about to enter the second phase to fully develop our online presence. The first stage was updating it and designing it in a way that was dynamic, yet accessible across all platforms, on any machine. This has taken six months, probably six times the period I'd been planning on, but it's there now and will hopefully continue to grow. The introduction of member profiles should provide both visitors to the site, together with us as a group, with a clearer picture of the range of people we have as members. It also has the possibility of providing us with an opportunity unlimited—except maybe by bandwidth—to present the work of our members to a much larger audience.

The imminent introduction of online transactions will allow visitors to the site from all over the world to join us instantly over the internet, rather than struggling to download a membership form, print it out and post it back to us. Through a larger international membership, a network of contacts can develop that will enable the group to promote itself on the global stage, and will also hopefully see screening opportunities developing offshore, together with an increased ability to bring films from other countries to Australia.

We are also steadily building a contact list outside the group, with key industry bodies and personnel now being part of an ever expanding mailing list. These people receive regular updates on the group's progress, the festival, and the developments of the group

online via email.

We are undoubtedly at a significant turning point where the group is moving in a new direction. Those in the committee, and the members supporting them are however, at a point where they are exhausting themselves and their ideas for what can be done to push the group along. With only a handful of volunteers supporting the committee, we just don't have the numbers needed to be able to run the group effectively. It would seem that in 1999 the problem has been that many of the members that kept it active in the first half of the decade have grown tired and are now taking a back seat when it comes to their involvement of the group. The real problem is emerging in the lack of involvement by new members.

Everything we do requires time and effort on the part of someone, and quite often that someone ends up being the same someones. Many may feel that they're doing their part for the group simply by paying their membership fees every twelve months, or thirteen or fourteen... but without active contributions at an organisational level, there is no group. A committee of seven does not necessarily ensure that everything will get done, as the idea of a committee is to co-ordinate the group's activities, but not necessarily organise and run them all, as seems to be the present situation.

If you want to see something happen within the group, **YOU** have to make it happen. Now is your chance. It's certain that at least some of the committee members will not be standing for next year, so we need new people with new ideas to take the initiative and make an active contribution.

As I've said in several previous articles for this newsletter, the more who contribute, the lighter the load is for all concerned. Obviously volunteer work does not pay any bills, and so people have to work to make ends meet. That doesn't mean you can't contribute. Somehow I've managed to be able to work 45 hours per week, then turn around and put in an additional 15-20 hours per week for the group. I know numerous other members have also done the same thing in the past. The end result of everything being left up to just a handful of people is that that handful burn out very quickly.

Right now, I'm looking at ways of developing a comprehensive workshop program to operate in association with Open Channel. The goal is to operate it on two

levels: one that covers the basics of filmmaking from start to finish, including camera operation, lighting, scripting and post-production; and another that covers specialised super 8 skills such as optical printing, telecine, home processing, cameraless film and animation. The development of a workshop program is one thing, implementing it is another. With my existing commitments to work, the festival, development of the group's website, study and my own filmmaking activities, this is something I personally can't afford to take on, I just don't have the time. A member, any member, who has just a few hours spare each week can do this, so I really hope that especially those who have expressed an interest in taking part in the workshops will step forward and help others and themselves, by MAKING IT HAPPEN.

Recent Open Screenings have been very light in terms of both audiences and the number of films being shown. On average we are seeing only 20-30 people at the Open Screenings, and no more than 3-4 films per month. The Open Screening does not exist purely as an avenue for people to show their films, it exists for people to see each others films, and take away new ideas and new visions with them. That's why we call ourselves a group and not a club or society, because we're about screen culture and not just facilities and skills.

This gradual decline in activity begs the question—is the Open Screening and indeed the group worth continuing into the next century?

## Animations @ October Open Screening

A series of short animated films by: Gregg Brown, Joe Coen, Alex Delly, Anna Ephrain, Travis Ramsdale, Samantha Sokolis, Corey Steer, and Rafael Ttotalos from the La Trobe Street Gallery School of Art and Design.

These up and coming animators are just completing 'Animation 1'—a 16 week introductory course into the methods and approaches to 20/30 animation using super 8 cameras. The course was tutored by Jane Barnett, an experienced freelance animator, and incorporated folio preparation for employment in the industry.

For further details about course enrolments, please contact Jane Barnett on 9470 5717.

## Jennifer Pignataro screening

There's something simultaneously enthralling and unsettling about Jennifer Pignataro's films — the way the long, slow, steady, comprehensive look she applies to the materiality of things works with the details, and the way her suggestive, sometimes spooky soundtracks (supplied by Annie Lennox and Steven Ball among others) set off cross currents underneath the visual surface.

In Pluto Lesson — A Subterranean Adventure (1993), a woman 'Ss voice reads from an astrology book about this small outer planet named for the Greek god and ruler of Hades. Pluto, the voice says, represents the hidden, unconscious even repressed urges of the psyche. . . [it] can represent demons beneath the surface. . . When these tensions are brought to the light of day . . .” Jennifer definitely works this territory — the surface, beneath the surface, and bringing to the light of day.

Face Job 1990 observes a beauty treatment going on behind a shop window annotated with services to every nook and cranny of the outer self. The camera glides over the beautician's paraphernalia — probes, paddles, knobs, handles, cloths, towels, lights variously suggesting nineteenth century medical appliances, silver plate tableware, Egyptian mummies and Roswell. There are whitegoods, a low light, a bright green light,

a glowing proboscis, electricity, the relaxed smiling subject and the smooth, calm beautician. Scene: The subject's head in a translucent cocoon of damp gauze like an unpeeled mummy (or a freshly wrapped one), a pupa. Despite the sound of a bass guitar and something highpitched, it's seems somehow deeply, restfully silent and quite bizarre.

Wild Day) (1990) likewise focuses steadily on an event and circles round it — the crowd at a big football match, the big experience of being there — but loads the mood from the beginning with opening shots of a dramatic, turbulent sky and fast music — hand drums, cymbals, something blown — suggesting excited heart beats, fizzing blood, inhuman cries. As with Face Job, it carries an eerie psychic charge into its subject.

Soft (1991) uses collage to surround its topic with a collection of images embodying the title — big out of focus pink roses, pink, mauve and cream light on grey, clusters of warm, muted colours, patterns, reflectiveness, soft light, soft things, soft shine, intercut with silvery black and white stills of hands and forearms making shapes like sign language. Running with this visible softness are sounds including something that might be dripping water or small clapsticks, and running across it a portentous, slightly ominous music full of industrial images.

Rota paro (1998) is a slow zoom into sunflowers — petals get bigger, focus gets softer, until it dissolves altogether in the brown centre of one flower while Annie Lennox sings A Whiter Shade of Pale (Skip the light fandango, turn cartwheels across the floor . . .). Sprinkled over the surface of the image from start to finish are regular red dots, bright lights dancing like spangles. Dedicated at the end: "In tranquil memory of . . ."

When I rang Jennifer to ask her if she'd show her films, she said (or words to the effect): "Good. Maybe it'll get me making films again." I hope it does.

VIRGINIA FRASER

## Make yourself some quick cash...

KADDISH is a performance piece by the British band Towering Inferno, who are performing at the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts at the State Theatre from Oct 22—24.

The performance requires 26 super 8 projectors with either 100w or 150 watt halogen lamps, to be used as part of the performance.

All machines will be fitted with new globes, will be insured by MIFA, returned with spare globes and a rental fee of \$50 per machine will be payable to members of the group.

The projectors need to be delivered to the office by October 15, and will be returned on October 25.

For further information, either contact the office, or call David Thomas on 9415 1272.

## For Sale:

1989 Kodachrome 40 (silent), \$10 each, 80 in stock. e.c., ph:9417 3840. Andrew.

### **Last Open Screening:**

Tuesday 14th September

OzKick—Ian Poppins

1999, 2 mins 12 secs, colour, sound stripe

VE Day—David Bell

1997, 3 mins, silent

Central—Tony Woods

1997, 22 mins, sound on cassette

### **Next Open Screening:**

Tuesday 14th December

7.30pm-AGM

Followed by  
The Open Screening

Byo take-up reels please.

See page  
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**website:** <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 (Aus)**

**contact the group at the address below**

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# **Super Eight**

# **S8**

**SURFACE MAIL**



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