

Super Eight

Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Inc.

ISSUE 163 November 2000



Beyond the Rage

In loose terms, the November Screening explores notions of globalisation from a distance. When I first volunteered to organise the screening back at the start of the year, the riots of November 1999 in Seattle and subsequent confrontations in Davos were still fresh in the world's mind. Being that my intention had been to screen a number of Super 8 films from overseas filmmakers, to give us isolated Melbournians a look-see at what the rest of the world was shooting, it seemed a perfect opportunity to try and capture the energy and anger of the various interests that gave rise to the anti-globalisation movement that has sustained a consistent groundswell the world over. SII wasn't even a blip on the horizon at that point.

Of course, as the year went on, the whole Globalisation issue seemed to fade from the headlines. When both pro and con parties showed themselves in Melbourne on September 11, I began to think of it (the screening) in more lateral terms. While it would be well and good to have programmed a 70 minute screening of films that would invariably be on the side

of good, it would also make the program rather narrow in its focus.

Instead, I decided to look for films that focus on specific components of a global community. They are largely films that have resonance as pieces encompassing the notion of globalisation, in that they are essentially films from outside our local community, revealing common threads through highly localised explorations of time and place. They focus on very specific communities in various regions of the world and highlight the unique qualities of those communities that may well be lost, should the WTO prove successful in homogenising us all. These more local films are interspersed with personal explorations and musings about the events that affect daily lives.

Most of the films have come from the United States, the Rutgers University Super 8 Film and Video festival in particular, with contributions also coming in from Emerald Reels in Seattle, as well as one or two from our own members (past and present).

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November Soundscape:

Texan filmmaker and musician, Atton Paul, discusses his origins in music and film, and the Super 8 soundtracks that will open the November Screening.

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Camera Movement:

Victoria Armytage's belated article discussing movement of camera.



No Time for Shopping

Reed O'Beirne, Super 8, stereo, 1999, 6:00

This film is the only one with a direct reference to the original concept. Reed is the driving force behind Emerald Reels, a similar Super 8 film group to the MS8FG which runs out of Seattle. No Time for Shopping documents the precursor to the Seattle riots of last November, when the protests against the WEF began as a peaceful gathering. Rapidly cutting shots of the diverse group of demonstrators are interspersed with close ups of growing numbers of police, ranging from regular uniform to fully kitted riot squads. Ambulances are queued in the background and there is clearly a building tension visible as the police begin to tighten up around the demonstrations. The film neither condemns nor condones what was to follow, but rather captures the energy, enthusiasm and even optimism that existed among protestors on that day.

Kerbside

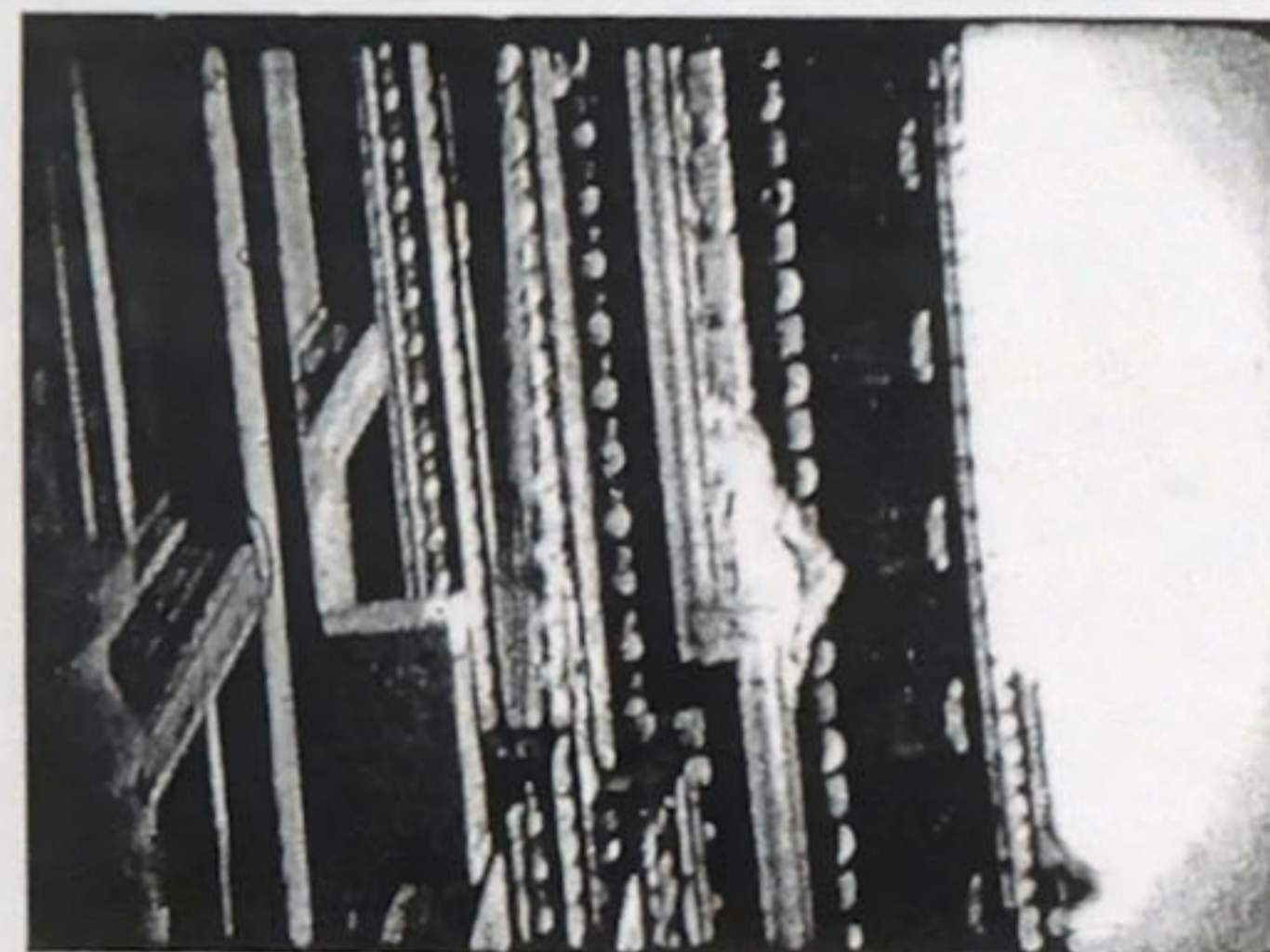
Heinz Boeck, Super 8, silent, 3:00

The focus shifts from Seattle to Manhattan. Kerbside is dominated by images of fire hydrants on a range of patches of turf, intermingled with quick grabs, usually of no more than a handful of frames, of the neighborhoods that spring from their edges. Of course it's not just fire hydrants that occupy this environment, but street buskers, vehicles, and refuse. It is to my mind a perfect illustration of an ongoing motif in what work of Heinz's I've seen, in the focussing onto small, obscure details that are encompassed in a larger environment, a larger environment of which we are only granted fleeting glimpses for context.

December

Dianne Ouellette, 16mm (screened on VHS), 11:15

The original was shot on 16mm and unfortunately we've only got the VHS version. This is a more humanised, personal narrative that dwells on the relationships between mother and



daughter, the milestones of age, and the inner reflection such transitions generate. While at times it borders on being self-indulgent, and could've spent some more time in editing, it has a mellowed, contemplative core and follows a loop that is touching in its resolution.

Change of Life

Barbara Bird, Super 8 (screened on VHS), 6:40

Another of the more personal narratives that explores menopause, from the point of view of a professional woman reaching the end of her reproductive life. The formula is somewhat familiar, in that it uses 'present day' footage, shot on DV, of the woman (who is never introduced), intercut with what is probably the cliched use of Super 8 in mainstream filmmaking—the flashback. It's the soundtrack that is the backbone of this film, with musings from the woman on what it's like to experience menopause, fading in and out against the dry, technical rendition of the physical experiences of menopause by a male specialist. The interplay of the emotive versus the medical keeps the film moving along.

Here, There, and Elsewhere

Lea Rekow, Super 8 (screened on VHS), 11:30

Lea Rekow is an ex-pat living and working in New York, and with that in mind, Here, There, and Everywhere is a curious departure from the environment in which she lives. It is an at times intimate exploration of the daily grind in some of the poorest regions on earth, having been shot in, among other places, India and Zimbabwe. It combines rapid intercuts of human routines and rituals—bathing/washing clothes in the Ganges, making tea in Thailand—with markets, streetscapes, industrial wastelands, as well as occasionally haunting images of sanpans drifting in silence on totally flat water.

Transmissions

Josh Haroldsen, Super 8 (screened on VHS), 1999, 7:00

Initially this film starts out as a somewhat tacky rip-off of Starman (the alien anthropologist trapped on earth, cut off from its home world) and indeed does appear to borrow heavily from that kind of storyline. Perhaps it's just given recent discussions in this newsletter, but I also see a thread in the that explores the issue of telecommunications, and the feeling that despite there now being more advanced means of communication, and greater numbers of communication devices, there is a feeling of isolation.

The film is rooted in a wilderness setting (though that is sometimes impeded upon by civilisation buzzing in the background), set starkly against a computerised narration, not unlike that which appeared in Gary O'Keefe's Ray Cresswell. It does make something of a clunky change in pace and soundscape at around the halfway mark and becomes more of an environmental ambience piece, though it does serve in a curious way, to reinforce its original objectives.

Stretchmark

Veena Cabrerros-Sud, Super 8 (screened on VHS), 1996, 9:16

Against the hard environment of an industrial American city, a single mother recalls images of her mother and the mothers of her friends as children, and of how they were always tired, always cleaning, always tired of cleaning. This film explores the intimacy between a single mother and her young son, the social attitudes thrown at her for not only her parental/marital status, but her colour as well, combined with the sacrifices and loneliness she endures to protect her child. It steps well clear of cliché and is among the most engaging of the films in this program.

A Mole

Akira Tetsuka, Super 8 (screened on VHS), 1999, 12:30

This film is exceptional. As such it won a top prize at the Annual US Super 8mm film and digital video festival (Rutgers). It is an exploration of the spiritual and psychological effects of the nuclear age, particularly in reference to Japanese culture. Using largely dark tunnels and

obscure framing, a large portion of the film carries distinct references to the gothic horror atmosphere prevalent in Ridley Scott's Alien. It expands time in it's considered, drawn out introduction, and then collapses time and movement at the moment of the nuclear strike through animation and timelapse.

The Deadly Variation

Hector Hazard, VHS, 1995

Hector's ability to flush out the most bizarre people one could hope to meet is certainly without doubt. While The Deadly Variation takes a little while to get going, it explores in great detail, the 'Garden of Eden' that was pursued and finally won by one of the subjects from the first film (Splitting the Trams) of his three part series. Dave, the subject of this film, is incredibly hyperactive, most probably agrophobic, but without doubt something of a character.

As the film progresses, Dave reveals himself to be somewhat contradictory. On the one hand he is a militant environmentalist—so much so he threatens to kill anyone thinking of taking his paradise away from him, and does a gun in the mouth/to the head routine ala Francis Coppolla—yet in one single take, he takes to the trunk of a banana tree with

his bare fists until he brings the tree down. He also makes an interesting segue by climbing a large chunk of volcanic rock to prove his 'masculinity' and superficial dominance over nature. At nearly fifty minutes, it is a touch overlong, and the ferocity of the film's subject is worn down by diversions away from the person and place. It does, however, make for a nice throw back to the days of sound film.



Hand Processing Workshop— Tutor: Moira Joseph

Join the fun and excitement in discovering how easy it is to hand process your own Super 8 or 16mm film. Learn how to create unusual and unique special effects, which will add another visual dimension to your filmmaking.

Techniques explained and demonstrated include creating a "negative" image, photograms and solarizing.

Participants are encouraged to be actively involved by bringing along their own already exposed film to hand process in the workshop.

Requirements: participants are required to bring a roll of exposed film for use in the workshop. Plus x and Tri x will remain B/W but will look negative when processed. As for color, K40 is highly recommended and has an orange negative base when processed. Old Agfa stock is OK and has a yellow negative base. I do not recommend any Ektachrome, although if this is all participants have to use, they may as well use it. It ends up with a dark red negative base, as does Fuji.

Date: Sat 2 Dec 2000

Time: 1-4 pm

Cost: \$45 for MS8FG members/\$90 non-members.

Venue: C.A.E. Centre, Flinders St., Melbourne.

Call the group for further info or register on the group website at <http://www.cinemedia.net/super8>

Neo-Narratives

curated by Bill Mousoulis

Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Open Screening, Tuesday 10 October 2000

A program of Super 8 films which utilise narrative elements (characters, plot, themes) in new and unusual ways, through such methods as abstraction, ellipsis, fragmentation, etc.

Pale Move

(2000, 4 mins 25 secs, 18 fps, sound on cassette)

Directed by Travis Dean. Sound by Fennesz and Speedy J., featuring Kira Levin and Matthew Albert

Film-maker's note: Inspired by location, at walking pace. An intimacy emerges among heavy grey lines that hang vertically from dull engineered reinforcements. Toned shadows spill quietly while over-exposure will happen.

M for Murder

(1988, 7 mins, 18 fps, sound on film)

Directed by Robert Jankov, featuring Bill Rencan and Robert Jankov

Curator's note: This is the director's one and only film, a masterful rejigging of the

slasher genre according to art cinema poetics, with a result reminiscent of Robert Bresson's *L'Argent*, which also features an axe murderer.

Cold Heart, Warm Mind

(1999, 4 mins, 18 fps, sound on cassette)

Directed by Bill Mousoulis, featuring Andrew Dowling

Film-maker's note: Synch sound Super 8 may be dead these days, but one can still plonk a voice over narration onto a cassette and play it along with filmed images of an actor, conjuring a traditional narrative form, but extending that form to new lengths and effects.

Normal Bias

(1986, 7 mins, 18 & 24 fps, sound on film)

Directed by Matthew Rees, featuring Adam May and Georgina Campbell

Curator's note: A fascinating experiment in rhythm, mood and meaning. Two alternate realities are created by utilising the one sequence (of a couple at home) in two different ways. In the process highlighting the tricky, ambiguous nature of personal relationships.

Today

(1999, 14 mins, 24 fps, sound on cassette)

Directed by Jake Wilson, featuring Milo Kossowski and Sarah Flattley

Film-maker's note: Today is the second film I've completed. It does have a slim narrative of sorts, though one that's often left in the background for the audience to decipher. Since I was still learning how to use the camera and editing equipment, there are all kinds of technical flaws – poor splices, shots out of focus, scratched footage, dodgy continuity – that make this task rather more difficult than was originally intended. Thematically, it's mainly about daily events and the spaces between them: there's also a time loop, a dream within a dream, and a few other mysteries I'll leave you to figure out if you can.

Cann Boys Film Supplies

Now selling Kodak Super 8 stocks:

Kodachrome: \$18/single cartridge, \$90/5 cartridges, \$180/10 cartridges.

Tri-X: \$20/single cartridge, \$95/5 cartridges, \$185/10 cartridges.

Prices include GST.

Also selling pro8mm high speed colour negative film from Super 8 Sound. Cartridges priced from \$55/single. Discounts available on bulk orders.

Prices include processing and GST.

Cameras available for hire: Canon 514, 814, 1014; Chinon Pacific 200/12XL and Beaulieu 6008 Pro with Crystal Lock!

For full details, visit <http://www.cannboys.com.au/film>
or e-mail film@cannboys.com.au

Mobile: 0408 557 382

MS8FG Joins Veg-In!

Rad Rudd is preparing a loop and possibly a collection of Super 8 films for display at veg-in. A video installation at the North Melbourne Town Hall, December 8–10. Yes, I will be projecting the film through a Super 8 projector despite it being a 'video' installation. If anyone would like to help out just speak to Rad. He's a nice guy, with short hair, and half asian look about him.

New Members

Jackie Felstead, Nicola Cowling, Anne-Marie Vercoistre, Cameron Smith, Geoffrey Wheelahan, Shane & Carl Looper, who joined the group during September and October

Returning Members:

Heinz Boeck, Melanie El Mir, Christos Linou, LW Rechter, Matt Pirrie, Michael Smith, Bill Elliot, Sherridan Green and Dave Kearney renewed their memberships during September/October.

Atton Paul



I bought my first super-8 camera, the CANON IO14xl-s, from the owner of a restaurant I was waiting tables at for \$50.00. I made my first two animation "tests" with that camera and a year later I had saved up enough tips to buy a new BEAULIEU 7008. It took me a while to get past the feeling of intimidation with the 7008 partly because I had spent so much money for it and the fear of braking it or even leaving fingerprints on it seemed to cause me to procrastinate. That was a strange feeling but I eventually got past that and once I actually began to handle the camera I also began to get inspired. I then decided to give my next "test" more emphasis to detail than the previous films by creating a slight narrative and also giving it a name.

"OBJECT MORIBUND" (b/w) is the visually told story of Bo-Ba and Mira and their plight to discover the royal plume and the secret urn filled with life giving seeds. Bo-Ba (a chinese ghost manifestation) and Mira (a victorian sleepwalker) roam their surreal world and once they encounter one another for the first time Bo-Ba seduces Mira and summons her into an intoxicating spin that causes her to give birth to the royal plume from within her shoulder. For a moment the two watch as the royal plume dances about and then a mysterious hand appears to come out of an opening on a nearby wall. Enticing the royal plume to retreat into the wall the hand reaches for it as it glides by but the royal plume teases the

hand first allowing a near catch. Eventually the royal plume gives in and and slowly spins into the wall. Bo-Ba reaches for the royal plume but not in time before it disappears. Moments later the fertile Mira reveals the secret urn of life giving seeds from under her base. The urn is pushed by a small hand that gives it motion and leads Bo-Ba and Mira through a door where they follow it to a strange wall creature. Once there Bo-Ba reaches into the secret urn and procures a handful of the life giving seeds which he deposits into the abdomen of the creature. This causes the wall creature to give birth to a myriad of infant images.

"PLUME: OBJECT CONTINUUM" (color) serves as a kind of sequel to "Object Moribund" in that I used a few of the same characters while also creating a few new ones like Bosch Bear. The production of this film was purely motivated by the announcement of an upcoming local super-8 film festival. It seemed like a good reason to make a new film even though I only had about one week to design, animate and get the film developed. The pressure to finish on time was exciting and for this film I also wanted to take a shot at making a soundtrack so I pulled my 4-track cassette recorder out of my closet and began recording although not really knowing what I was doing. After several days of very little sleep I had succeeded in my goal and surfaced with a finished film complete with an original soundtrack and even some extra music left over that could serve as background music for my earlier animation test films.

These films were exercises in stop-motion animation. I've been fascinated with this form of animation since I was a small child after seeing the films by the legendary RAY HARRYHAUSEN ("Golden voyage of Sinbad", "Clash of the Titans", etc.).

A highlight to my life was when I met and spoke with him while he was visiting Dallas a few years back. We talked about animation and how he has inspired my life to create films. Throughout the years my research into stop-motion animation has uncovered many other inspiring animators such as Piotr Kamler (creator of the stunningly beautiful "Cronopolis"), Karel Zeman, Jiri Trnka, Walerian Borowczyk, Jan Lenica, Brothers Quay, Jan Svankmejer and many more.

As far as my experience in film goes I left home at an early age and therefore I wasn't

able to afford the luxury of attending film school so I'm not exactly molded into any typical approach of filmmaking. My films are my teachers and each one has thus far been called a "test". Realizing this I have attempted to at least give my animation "tests" some semblance of style with the hope that each film could, in a way, stand on its own and serve as a document of my progression. For example with "OBJECT CONTINUUM" I wanted to try some different techniques that I had not done for "OBJECT MORIBUND". In-camera title effects and pixilated camera movements are some of what I did for the first time as well as making a soundtrack. There are so many things that can be done with super-8 and I plan to explore as many of them as possible. Having such an inexpensive tool available has certainly changed my life and opened my eyes. I dealt with not being able to go to film school a long time ago and now I just create without looking back. Super-8 affords this by being a medium that inspires creativity regardless of any schooling one has had or high-end equipment one uses. After all it's not so much the tool one uses as it is the end result that counts. The emotions that come out of ones work is far more important that the equipment used to create it.

The above music has resulted in the release of my first 7" vinyl record "SOUNDTRACKS FOR ANIMATED SUPER-8 FILM, vol. I" on my own label DYING BIRD. This record has been getting great reviews of which I feel very honored to receive and I plan to release additional volumes in the future by myself and hopefully other artists that make their own music for their super-8 films. Anyone interested in submitting material for review can do so by first contacting me via email at: dyingbird@earthlink.net.

Also, copies of the record can be ordered on-line at:
<http://www.anomalousrecords.com> or:
<http://www.eclipse-records.com>

Previous Reviews

1. EYE MAGAZINE no.25
"Pure 4-track recordings that function as billed. A fascinating idea, beautifully executed."
2. COOL AND STRANGE MUSIC MAGAZINE no.16
"Some artist paint with brushes, some with knives, and others like Atton Paul

choose to express themselves in more unusual ways. Atton is a filmmaker and makes his films in the nearly-extinct Super-8 format. He's also a musician, and stubbornly creates his own film soundtracks on 4-track tape decks, using children's keyboards, manipulated voices, and other unusual sound sources. He is dedicated to promoting these almost-forgotten mediums, disdaining modern digital technology.

His first single has been issued on 7" virgin vinyl, and is very atmospheric-almost spooky. It is music without melody-just an ambiance, moody and calm. It is the kind of emotion-evoking music that you usually only hear in your subconscious-music to dream by- or for an unplanned, otherworldly visit from a lost soul. His vision is uncanny and brilliant. Atton also painstakingly assembles photo collages to create a graphic look for his musical package, using eerie-looking eyes grafted from magazines and mix-and-matching them to create strange, new creatures. if it sounds slightly eschew, well, it is. And it's all part of Atton Paul's world: blending and assembling finely-crafted creations from society's discards, and proudly hold his children up for all the world to see.

This is someone to keep an eye on, a craftsman honing his art without regard for what others have already done."

3. PTOLEMAIC TERRASCOPE no.28

"Dying Bird is a new label from Houston, Texas, launched with great artistic panache by Atton Paul as an outlet for a series of home-based, low-cost 4-track recordings and Super-8 films. I haven't seen the latter, but the first vinyl release is a single by Atton himself entitled 'Soundtracks for animated super-8 films, vol.1'.

Side 1's 'Plume: Object Continuum' is a minor masterpiece of looped tapes, atmospheric frequencies and sinister-sounding toy keyboards, the closing picking up from where it begins like an endless dream of nightmarish proportions. Well worth dropping 'em a line before he joins some strange cult and disappears altogether."

4. BACKWASH MAGAZINE no.74

"Atton Paul isn't into hi-tech fancy-schmancy stuff. He's an old-school, do-it-yourself, cut-and-paste, lo-fi fiend. That doesn't mean he doesn't have a polished aesthetic. His 7" vinyl sets the mood with birds chirping and calm, yet slightly spooky tones made on vintage toy keyboards and other bits and pieces.

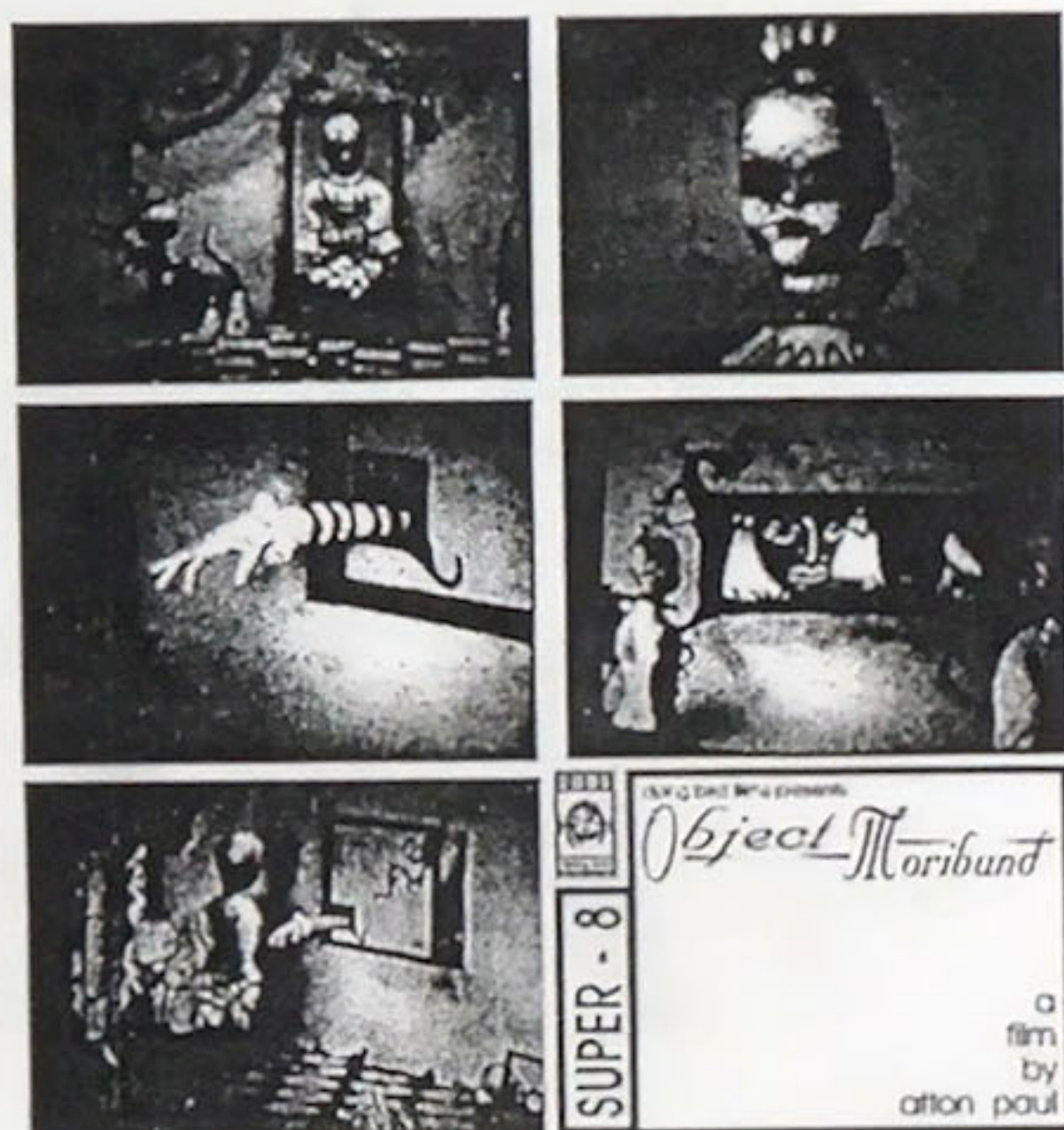
I felt like sitting back with the lights out and having a seance (then jumping up to flip the record over). I'd like to see the animated super-8 this goes to. It sure ain't Looney Tunes. But its just as interesting."

Upcoming projects:

- After a long time of recording music I will begin making some new Super-8 films including a video to an upcoming new record I'll be releasing very soon. It's another 7" vinyl record and a full length CD will follow hopefully by the end of the year.
- Also in the works is a tribute record to animator RAY HARRYHAUSEN. This will also be a 7" vinyl record and the music consists of pieces I recorded while thinking of the mythical creatures he brought to life. Psychedelic and trippy!!!
- Artwork for various super-8 films has been made and are now in the planning stages the first of which will be about a top-hat wearing Hippo as well as an epic cut-out animated film about dreams.
- Also I am halfway completed with a short film/music video that I'm shooting completely with a Fisher-Price PXL-2000 camera (Pixilvision). This now collectable camera was manufactured back in the 80's by a toy company and records onto regular audio cassette tapes producing a high contrast B/W and grainy or "pixilated" image. It's unique image quality and total portability has been utilized by artists and filmmakers such as David Lynch who used the camera to film the 'stalker' scenes in "Lost Highways" and again in the Lynch produced "Nadia". My film deals with ghosts. Images of floating spirits and spinning star fields engulf this film during most of the hallucinations scenes that I experience after trying to overdose because I've lost my love. All of the artwork has been completed including creatures that I've made out of collage images, different background plates and shaped camera masks. I also play the ghost that comes to visit me as I "descend" into the underworld. All of those scenes were filmed last year while I still had long hair. Now I have short hair and I will soon film the scenes of the 'sad guy' as well as the spirit creature scenes. Music is also completed and the title song "Ghost" will later appear on a mini-LP set for release next year.
- Next year I will also have (if time permits) a new animated super-8 film based on Elizabeth Bathory. This is a recent idea

and I'm still in the thinking stage. Only promotional artwork has been started at this time. STAY TUNED!!

SUPER-8 IS ALIVE!
-Atton Paul / June 2000



SOUNDTRACKS FOR ANIMATED SUPER-8 FILMS, vol. 1



7-inch vinyl record of Atton Paul's soundtracks

Camera Movement...

You don't have to read this article to grasp the concept of moving the camera around, as you probably do it already without realising that the image you have created has a technical name. Basically, as the Handbook for Super 8 Production says, camera movement should be planned to fit the style and requirements of the film and not detract from the main action (unless that is the effect that you are after..).

The majority of Super 8 cameras come with one very versatile lens, the *Zoom*. Zooming in and out on your subject creates movement within the frame, whilst camera and subject remain stationary. The real advantage of the *zoom*, (apart from being a really cool word) is its ability to make available a range of focal lengths without changing lenses. Framing, composing and depth of field are all made easier.

The *pan* shot is when the camera is moved horizontally on its axis. The *tilt* shot is when the camera is moved vertically. Both shots are most effective when done slowly and smoothly, then again it does depend on what kind of effect you are trying to create. A tripod comes in handy at this stage, or a bicycle wheel (see David Kuzsnir's *Revolution*) if you want to combine these two techniques for a truly amazing image.

It is a good idea with any shot, to leave a few seconds before and after, to allow for options in the editing room.

Trucking shots and *dolly* shots can create very unsettling but very effective images. As the camera moves, objects in different planes seem to move past each other and a feeling of 3Dedness is achieved. The *dolly* generally moves towards or way from the action, whilst the *trucking* shot parallels the action.

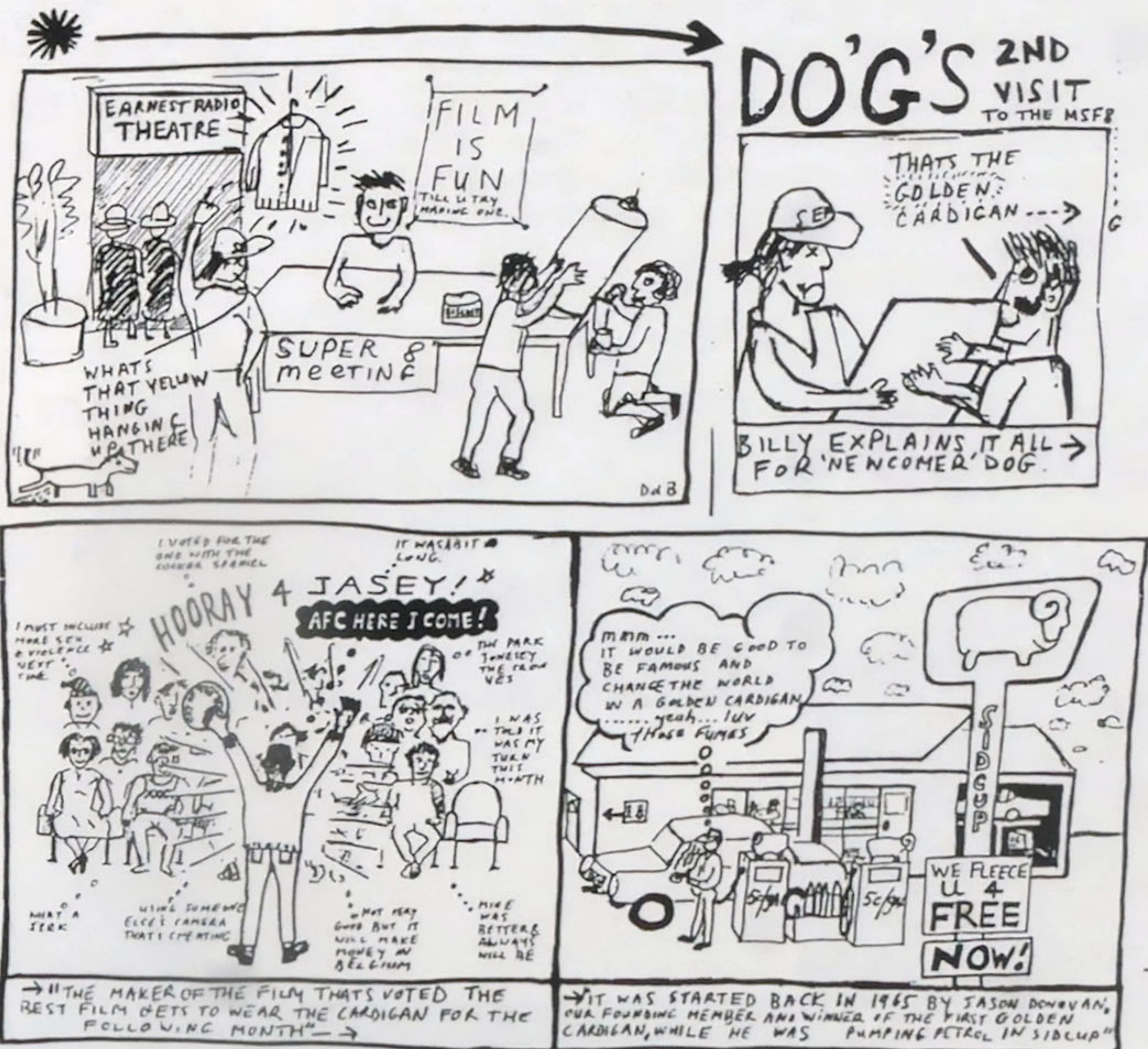
You don't need a lot of expensive jibs and cranes to create these effects either, anything with wheels will generally do, bike, skateboard, shopping trolley, wheelchair, car, etc. possibilities are endless.

There are many ways to move the camera during a shoot, rotating, jiggling, waving, throwing... plus various combinations of the aforementioned, pan-tilt, dolly-tilt-pan, tilt-zoom etc...

Interesting point of view shots can be created, by strapping the camera to animals or athletes.

Then again, if all else fails you can move your subjects around, or for that added complication, move both, together, simultaneously, at the same time... for instance, the camera and the subject move towards on another, as the camera zooms out. Once again, possibilities are endless, so get along and shoot something..

Victoria Armytage



Last Open Screening:

Tuesday 10th October

Shorts—Tony Woods

15minutes, 18fps, cassette sound, 2000

Rays—Peter Lane

3mins 30 secs, 18 fps, cassette, 1999

Rialto—Nick Ostrovskis

20 minutes, 18 fps, silent, 1986

I wish—Bill Elliot

3 minutes, 18 fps, silent, 2000

Next Open Screening:

Tuesday, 14th November 2000

7:00pm

Soundscape by: Atton Paul

7:30pm

Beyond the Rage—curated by Ben Ryan

Followed by the Open Screening

BYO take-up reels please

ISSUE 163

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

email: super8@netspace.net.au

Become a Member!

For those who are not currently members, joining the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group can provide you with so much more than just a newsletter. As members you will receive discounts on equipment hire, entry to screenings, and the chance to participate in Australia's only film organisation dedicated to the Super 8 gauge. As a recipient of the newsletter you'll receive tips on where to get cheap stock and processing, telecine, forthcoming festivals and Super 8 events from around the world, as well as technical information on equipment use and maintenance.

Membership is \$45.00 full/\$30 concession. Contact the group at the address below for an application form or download one from the website.

Layout by: Ben Ryan and Nick Ostrovskis

Phone: +61 3 9417 3402 Fax: +61 3 9417 3804

Office Address: Level 1, 207 Johnston Street, Fitzroy

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Super Eight

S8



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If undeliverable return to:

Melbourne Super 8 Film Group

PO Box 2033

Fitzroy MDC

Victoria 3065

Australia

Chris Windmill
GPO Box 1690
Darwin, NT 0801