

THIS GLAMOROUS CITIZEN WAS PHOTOGRAPHED
IN THE LAST OPEN SCREENING. IF HE STEPS
FORWARD HE WILL WIN \$\$\$\$

SUPER EIGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MELBOURNE SUPER-8 FILM GROUP NO.24 APRIL '88



REVIEWS

Bert Logies Furore!

Love in a Vacuum

A film by Fritha Borland, Bryant George, and Mathew McCaughey.

Super-8, No Frills Fund, approx. 30 mins.

- Reviewed by Bill Mousoulis -

Firstly, a note of castigation to the film-makers for presenting their work with portions of the soundtrack uncompleted. It's hard for an audience to respect a film if the film-makers themselves don't seem to.

Love in a Vacuum is a film of polarities. Technically, generically, thematically, and formally.

Technically. Super-8 drama has almost always suffered from a hobbyists' curse: that of the dress-up, where young (early 20's) 'actors' are used to portray characters beyond their years and capability. This results in homage, which, granted, is most times the intention, but other times is not. Is Love in a Vacuum meant to be just a students' homage to Antonioni? I don't think so. The acting in the film is quite adequate, but that's not the point. Drama requires illusion and Super8 is an expert smasher of it. Sometimes films just need that even sheen that the larger gauges provide.

Generically. Is Love in a Vacuum into being a serious exploration of its characters or a satiric indictment of them? But no, the real polarity I see here is that of drama/seriousness (including satire) on the one side, and absurdism on the other. The absurdism is in the form of the vacuum-cleaner salesman, incongruously (at first) entering into Nikki the artist's home and world.

Thematically. Are Nikki and her friend Dean idle rich or struggling artists? That is the first of a long line of possible thematic dualities: the simple paintings and the complex live sculpture; Nikki's emotional self-entrapment and her final freedom; Nikki's exit from isolation and the breaking of community; indeed, love, and a vacuum.

Formally. In a nutshell: the interchange of diegetic drama with poetic exposition - physics with metaphysics.

Love in a Vacuum comes from nowhere (or the film-makers' minds) and promptly returns there. (Nikki goes from one vacuum to another.) It's a film that seems to speak of reality, but merely creates it. For a film of such polarity, I can have only one response: I like it... and I don't. (I love paradox and ambiguity in cinema, but the differences presented in this film are, I feel, irreconcilable.)

The March Open Screening got off to an explosive start at 7:30 with one hour of uninterrupted waiting. At 8:30 a few more people arrived and films were screened.

The first film was another of Barry Branchflower's incisive "Unedited Rushes" wherein Barry films things seemingly randomly while delivering a profound subtextual negation of the idea of any kind of editorial process whatsoever. I felt like I was in a room listening to many people all talking at once, and if only I had the power to decipher meaningful phrases and organize them into a coherent order, then the experience would make sense and I would feel no sorrow.

Allow me to say that I am certainly not against the idea of showing rushes to gauge audience response. But the idea of showing them while the film-author is 50,000 miles away seems to be based on a higher logic so perverse that I hope we get many more of these mysterious artifacts. They are very character-building.

The second film (Sam Reed and Sam Thomson's Death in the Streets) was totally identical to James Clayden's With Time to Kill, except it was a couple of years older and made by grammar school boys... a mindless and strangely entertaining procession of gratuitous killing, hip music and jokingly nihilistic philosophy. (I've also seen the same film made by a lower class of school boy, but it never has quite the same credibility when the Mafia boss's lair looks like a fibro nightmare.) The film was well cut and this made me feel happy, vigorous, and with desire to live forever.

Love in a Vacuum from Beaut films is a European art picture, ambitious, well-lit, three of the four principals act well, opulently set-dressed, revolving around a bizarre and blunt metaphor wherein the pushy kinetic virility of an obnoxious vacuum-cleaner salesman is transformed into a static fetish-pet art-object by an artist, who for the sake of cliché I will describe as "tormented." She is staging her first exhibition. I liked this film for its opulent and very "posey" style, though I realise this "posiness" is potentially its biggest magnet for scorn. When music is added this film should be lovelier than a bison's fresh head-dress.

Then, Nick Ostrovskis showed us his Flower Animation. Indescribable things took place including business that looked like solarization but Nick informs me this is in fact an effect achieved by varying the angle of back-light on the slides used as picture sources. A most wondrous film.

Then, the March Open Screening became suddenly over, and everyone had to go back to their own homes.

Chris Windmill

WHAT PRICE REPAIRS?

I was astounded to hear from one of our members that a camera shop charged \$50, a quote, and suggested it would cost \$500 to repair his Eumig projector.

His projector was later repaired by John Calder for an hour's work and \$1 for the part.

Perhaps we should start a petition to bring back John Calder.

I spoke to the people at Specialty Camera House about the situation, and he was astonished as I was.

His name is Brian, and he stated that he had never heard of a projector costing that much to be repaired. He stated that he only charges \$15 for a quote, and that if the person whom he sends the projector to, cannot repair it, it gets forwarded on to an Electronics Whiz Kid, who finds an answer to the problem.

He did have to get a new printed circuit for a camera once which cost \$190, and the total bill came to \$240, but that was the only excessive bill he can remember.

The Specialty Camera House will take Tax Exempt forms, but the order would have to be \$60 or over to make it worthwhile for him to do the paperwork.

His prices are (as at 15/3/88):

Kodachrome 40 sound \$22.50

Agfa 40 sound \$18.65

Kodak 160 sound \$21.90 not

including processing.

Note: these are not the tax exempt prices.

It seems like it might be a good idea for a few of us to get together, and order a batch of films. I believe Kodak would sell direct if 10 or more are ordered. Is this true?

I am not in a position to recommend repairs from Specialty Camera House, Tivoli Arcade (about halfway down) 235 Bourke St., Melb, as I haven't had anything repaired by them.

Perhaps someone will give it a try, and let us know through the newsletter whether they were happy or not.

If you use this shop, mention you are from the Melbourne Super-8 Film Group, and later on we may be able to arrange special discounts.

Ian Poppins

Fields of Vision

Recently I saw Hugh McSpedden's performance Fields of Vision. An advertisement proclaimed it as:

A 36-projector audio visual dance presentation, incorporating macro-photography, animation, fluid projection, sound to light, lasers, etc....

It consisted of everything BUT film. That's surprising. Especially since Hugh used to make 16mm. experimental films. The 36 well-orchestrated slide projectors provide the main visual thrust. A dancer and lasers are intermittent accessories.

The performance was introduced by a weird planetary landscape and a projected flying saucer which glides from the wall onto the screen. The theme of this two hour piece is vaguely religious. Hugh's interested in the idea of infinity, the universe, eastern mysticism, beauty in nature and symmetry. This mood is enhanced by recurring symbols: the iris (the most dominant), mandalas and chakras (human energy fields.) Though I'll never be a convert to the spiritual nonsense, I enjoyed the way it was done.

Music is cleverly synchronized to the visuals. It ranges from the relaxing Pachelbel's Canon in D major to frantic electronic music. My favourite section was a dazzling abstracted iris image deep in epileptic fit. It was constructed from flickering hard edge colored lines. Its geometry dances in manic convulsions over a soft grey computer formed shape. The audience applauded strongly. It was ACE!!!

In another part faces of friends and relatives engulf the whole screen at one second per head. I saw Michael Lee's smiling beard in this rapid procession.

My only complaints were the ad nauseam fluid projections and the gimmicky red laser. Still, it's definitely worth seeing!! It's on at the "Living Rainbow Workshop." The Nimbin of Norda Melbourne.

Nick Ostrovskis

After the Dream

26. 1. 88

This year I've mainly spent writing, developing ideas, and working on scripts. I have shot little, a few scenes with people I felt suited.

The films I've worked on have all been in a SOUND capacity. Eat Your Greens with Peter Green and Barry Dickens, shot on Super-8, which opened the Melb Fringe Fest. Documentary of Art for Roger Stephen, 3rd year Art student at RMIT and Elder, Middle, Younger, a Swinburne film shot on 16mm.

It seems to be my greatest battle to get good sound on Super-8 single system. I use an 816 Sennheiser with a heavily blimped camera, usually an Elmo 1012. The 816 feed is split. One feed going to the camera, the other to a full track reel-to-reel tape recorder without any sync reference.

I also record the scene again directly after cut is called without the camera rolling. These wild lines are as close to the same feeling as was expressed in the actual performance and 90% of the time sound better than post-syncing the lines in a studio. I prefer an 816 mic wherever I can get it in. To me it's the only mic that isolates camera noise from dialogue. Radio mikes for me are fairly useless. Even the Sony diversity radio mics tend to rustle and crackle too much to justify their existence. If a shot is so wide you can't get a boom in, then you won't notice any wavering in lip sync if you have to post sync or wild line the dialogue.

After the Dream

As I said, most of the year I've spent writing and would now like to start production on some of these small scripts.

The Super-8 Group

For me the group doesn't really exist. The films I've worked on have nothing to do with the people, equipment, or Festivals that the Super-8 Group is involved in. I've been to 2 or 3 meetings in 1987 as I have every year since the group started but for me the group is full of theorists, i.e. all I can hear echoing in my mind after each meeting was someone saying "Which direction do you think Super-8 is going?" and it would go on and on.

The lecture of screening with Dirk de Bruyn was another example. I thought I was at the commune 15 years ago listening to some drugged out hippie. I stayed 15 min. and left. So it's not for me, but the group is growing and obviously people like watching experimental art films, etc. i.e. people doing 360 degrees with their cameras, like the Cantrills. I'm sorry last year I sat through so much of this material at festivals and screenings it made me bitter towards anything with the group's insignia on it. Only once did I see anyone attempt a reasonably tangible drama script and it was Chris Windmill's Congratulations Gazelle-Head, but all reviews were over-rated.

At the Moment

So I work with a group of people who usually shoot with 16mm. but who don't mind shooting Super-8 as a challenge. We all share the same common interest of wanting to shoot a decent drama script with low budget equipment to prove that it can be done with a small crew and without big lighting set-ups.

Greg Nelson

BITS & PILES

- *** 16mm. projector for sale. Hocishun SC-10, complete with reel. Excellent condition. New price \$1200, sell for \$200. Mt. Waverly area, 232 7263, ask for Jim.
- *** Fringe Open Screenings are back with us, and at the good old Grierson Cinema, 17 St. Andrews Place. All gauges welcome. Next two screenings: Wed April 6 and Thu May 5 at 7:30 p.m. For more info, ring David Cox on 419 1542
- *** The 3rd Melbourne Super-8 Film Festival will occur in August of this year. Mark Freeman has been appointed Director. A festival sub-committee will be formed. If you want to be on it, ring Mark.
- *** Piero Colli is making his Swinburne film for this year in late May and requires the voluntary help of several people to crew for the one week's duration of the shoot. Those searching for film experience ring Piero on 818 6949.
- *** Don't forget the St. Kilda Film Festival which will run April 13 - 16 at St. Kilda's National Theatre. For more info ring Nigel Buesst on 347 5525.
- *** Speaking of the devil, the 1988 version of Nigel's "MELBOURNE FILM-MAKERS RESOURCE BOOK" is now available for \$5 from Readings, Open Channel, Lemac. It's an invaluable guide.

SCREENING OF FILMS BY

NICK OSTROVSKIS

+

BILL MOUSOULIS

at: The Basement

Footscray Community Arts Centre

45 Moreland St. Footscray

TUESDAY 26TH APRIL, 7:00 p.m. (sharp!!)

All welcome - free

Since the inception of movie film over a quarter of a million movies have been made. This represents about five million miles of film, or fifty years of continuous viewing, day and night.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT!!!

Bill Mousoulis' Hps for cinema goers for April.

Go see = the radical Empire of the Sun, the snappy Hiding Out, Holly Hunter in Broadcast News.

Don't see = the disappointing (compared to the Bangles' clip) Less Than Zero, Overboard, the waste of money known as The Pursuit of Happiness.

Make your own mind up = the crafty House of Games, the dizzy Wings of Desire.

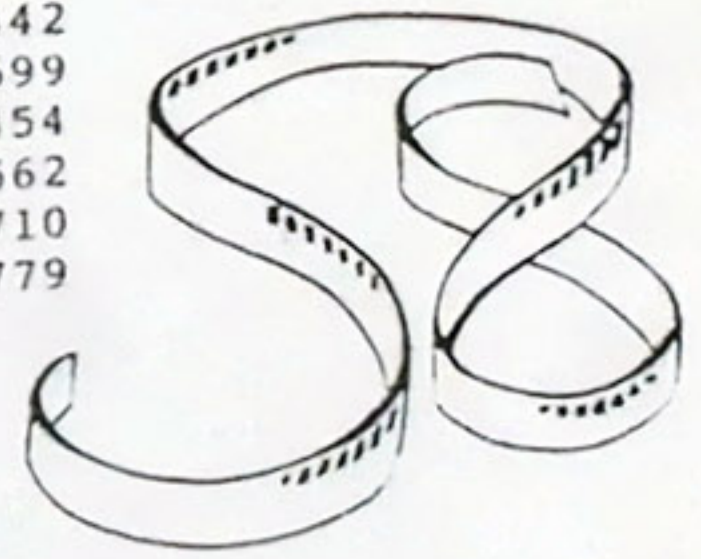


A PHOTOGRAPH OF SOME PEOPLE WATCHING FILMS AT THE LAST OPEN SCREENING - 2/1/88

Next Meeting

Contact Numbers

Anne-Marie Crawford 527 8442
Mark Freeman 428 0699
Sarah Johnson 534 9454
Bill Mousoulis 419 6562
Matthew Rees 596 3710
Chris Windmill 531 2779



DATE: Tuesday, April 12.

VENUE: (note the change, due to money)

AFI Theatrette, AFI, 47 Lt. Latrobe St.

At 7:30 p.m.

WORKING ON YOUR SOUNDTRACK

Some tips for getting the best results on your soundtrack gained from practical experience using equipment readily available here.

PRESENTED BY NOEL LLOYD

At 8:30 p.m.

OPEN SCREENING

Simple: BYO films.

51 Donation Admission

OPEN !!!



This newsletter is published monthly by the Melbourne Super-8 Film Group.

Contributions welcome (deadline: 4th. Monday of each month).

Membership to the Super-8 Group is \$10 per 12 months.

Editorial and layout by: Nick OSTROVSKIS + Bill Mousoulis

Keep those contributions coming in! We want the newsletter to be jam-packed.

SUPER EIGHT

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