

SUPER EIGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MELBOURNE SUPER-8 FILM GROUP

NO. 31 NOV

LAST OPEN SCREENING

7.30 - Matthew Rees Retrospective;

Gerry Gee Junior (1983)

Video Search (1984)

Twister (1986)

Normal Bias (1986)

Birthday Boy (1986)

Bardot (1987)

A Very Special Day
(Super Eight excerpt (1988))

At 8.30PM OPEN SCREENING

Bigley's Bargain Box By Andrew Fitzroy

Fuller Avenue By Mark Freeman

Training By Richard Tuohy

Granny Cuts Loose By Michael Helms

A Film By Andrew Fitzroy
By Andrew Fitzroy

A Pedestrian's Guide to Collingwood
By John Jolley

TRAINING By Richard Tuohy

Nice film you have there Richard, but a word of warning: theres only a thin line(but a world of difference) between what you've achieved and what you could have achieved. I'm talking about that slick mode of naturalism as nurtured by the commercial media (think of those late night three minute fillers used by channels 7 and 10, or the images backing up weather reports). This mode embraces technical virtuosity over thematic exploration, or, rather, buries its subject matter(seaguls, derelics, couples) in a euphoria of mythopoetic pleasantness. Nick Ostrovskis aint no Koyaanisquatsi; lets hope you're no Channel 7.

- Bill Mousoulis

A.G.M.

The Melbourne Super Eight Film Group as per it's constitution will be having it's 1988 Annual General Meeting on Tuesday December 13th (December Open Screening date)at Friends of the Earth building 222 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy 7.30 pm start.

Any interested members wishing to stand for a position on the committee must forward their nominations in writing to Sarah Johnston on or by the 14th November, no later.

Current committee;

Sarah Johnston President
Bill Mousoulis Secretary
Matthew Rees Treasurer
Chris Windmill
Mark Freeman

All present committee members will be standing for Re-election for 1989.



2.
BIG STUFF HAPPENING

1. The M.S.8.F.G. HAS RECIEVED FUNDING FROM THE A.F.C. for the first in hopefully a series of compilation videos of S.8 films. Bill Mousoulis is compiling the first; a selection of films from 1981 to the present. Any suggestions, talk to Bill.

2. The M.S.8.F.G. has applied for funding from the A.F.C. to set up an office, hire a part time office worker, buy equipment to set up a recourse pool, produce a yearbook, run the festival etc There has been no reply as yet...

Chris Windmill has suggested that if we get the funding we should buy a greyhound and race it. Whatever money we have left, we should use to bet on it when its set up for a win. We would then become The Melbourne Super-Eight Film and Greyhound Racing Group. The M.S.8.F.&G.R.G.!!!
What D'ya say?????

(Next month "Why we didnt get funding and how I became the lure for a rabid pack of Melbourne Super 8 film-makers" By Chris 'Race four, Dog two' Windmill)

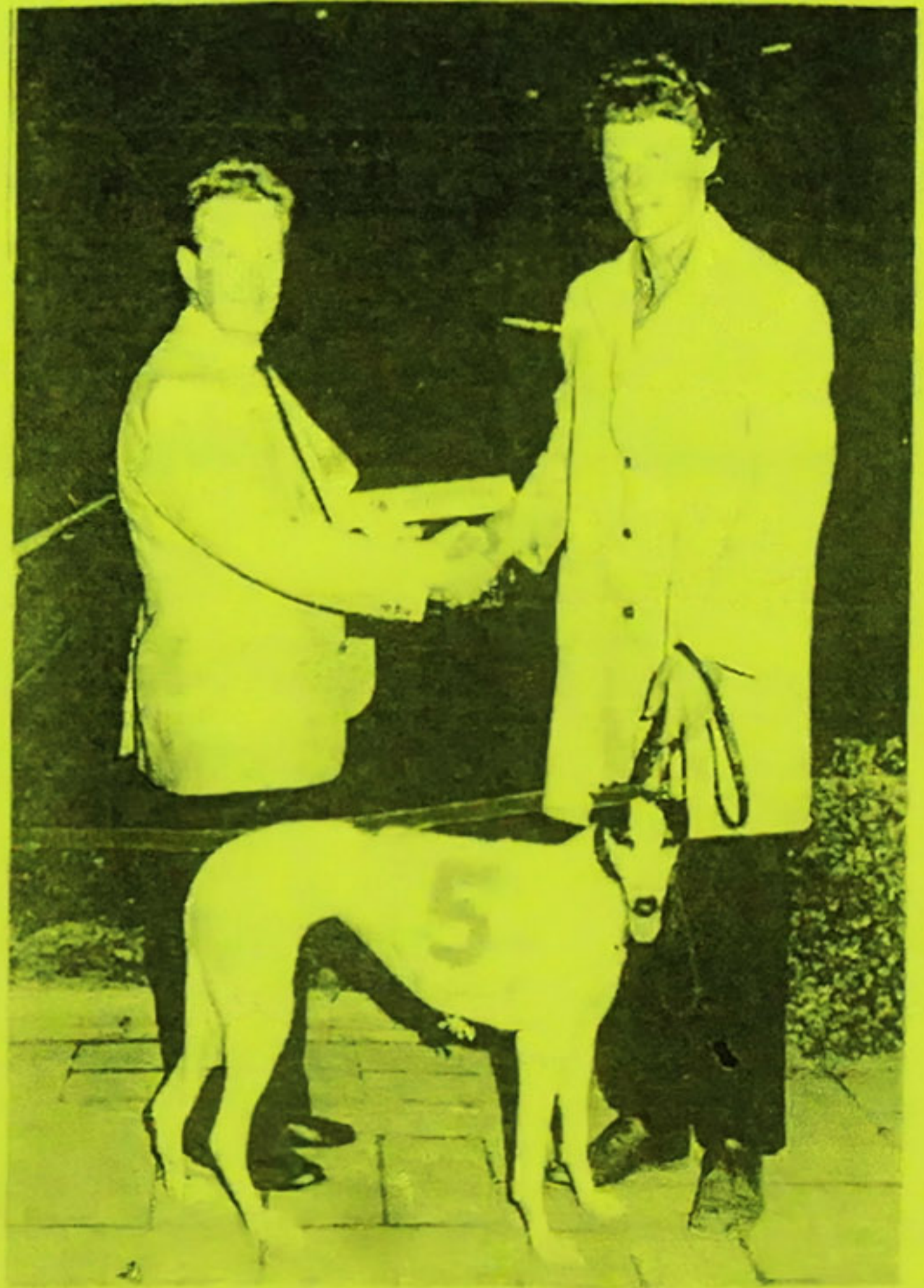
From Nick Ostrovskis

Mama don't take my kodachrome away.

It was very apt that the latest film/performance piece by Arthur and Corinne Cantrill at La Mama was projected on two stretched canvas screens. The images had the quality of a series of paintings. Also Ivor Cantrill's colorful paintings were often seen.

The two hour piece is a homage to film and to 'Prestonia', the 100 year old house where Arthur and Corinne live. It examines their own 30 year commitment to film, a medium they believe will soon be lost. Shots of 'Prestonia' were often interspersed with Arthur's discussion of film history and the screening of several early films. In this way the 'end of film' is connected to the origin of film.

Kodachrome 16mm film stock was used and the original was projected to maximize the qualities of this stock - ie. its strong color, high resolution etc... The images in this film were about light. Late afternoon summer light, sunlight illuminating leaves and flowers and the 'camera obscura' effect in one of 'Prestoria's' rooms. There were several stunning shots. One was a shot of light on a bowl of incredibly kodachromed tomatoes by a kitchen window. A strong reflection served to echo this still life. Also a shot of light passing through a stained glass window looked very beautiful with a colored shadow against the wall.



Chris Windmill purchases racing dog with Super-Eight Group funds.



5-MASTER FOX, 1: CROCK.

3

Notes on "Projected Light" by Corrinne and Arthur Cantrill.

There is a political message bubbling away beneath the surface of "Projected Light" - it is "Make films before the entire medium disappears!" "A kind of techno - conservation where the underground film environment is declared a national park."

The film - performance parallels the history of cinema itself with that of the Cantrill's house "Prestonia" and by implication the history of the Cantrills, their work, and its relationship to the experimental film movement generally. For any study of this movement is a study of a political imperative extending as far back as living memory.

The performance is also an obituary to Kodachrome, the versatile workhorse reversal filmstock employed by independent film makers for the last thirty years. The fact that this filmstock is the number one Super 8 filmstock amongst film makers makes the message all the more imperative as 16mm reversal filmmaking becomes economically and physically difficult to maintain as the stock and the services which accompany it are all but gone.

The Cantrills seem to paint a picture of themselves as the last of a rare breed held in self imposed exile in their physical and aesthetic studio/fortress "Prestonia", custodians of an ancient and noble craft and philosophy - "kinema" not cinema, not film even, necessarily, but projected light as artform. The meditative pondering of reflected light waves as they enter the house via windows cracks, spaces between leaves in the trees outside and when needed via the mechanical apparatus of film.

Their work this time challenges us as film makers to Act! Before a new time arrives where the transmitted beams of video monitors interrupt the until now steady flow of film images which, they claim, are soon to cease due to economic and technological pragmatism which sees the role of video overtaking that of reversal film.

My feeling on this is somewhat fatalistic. Like many in the later part of the eighties who are only beginning to make a "Kinema" for ourselves, we must utilise what we can. Perhaps now more than ever film makers need to exploit the limitations placed on them. The demise of Kodachrome is only a symptom of a trend to discourage all but purely commercial or pro-establishment moving image making. But the Cantrills represent a genuine "golden era" of film in Australia. I think of the Bert Deling film "Dalmas" where the director says to his cast/crew (they were the same people) "There are a few thousand feet of film left, anyone who wants can take a camera and shoot off as much as they want..." "These were special times, the early seventies when money was around, most people were young and pissed off."

I remember seeing so many experimental films in the mid to late '70s when I would attend my brothers experimental film tutorials held by Graeme Cutts, at Rusden. I'd wag school to see 'em, and if they weren't at one place they were at another - the State Film Centre was still free then. no "User pays" bullshit then! Alas today, the youthful and

conservative forces don the clothes of radicalism and usurp its perennial energy to trivialise earnest criticism of the ugly times in which we live. In short, can we afford the luxury of defending specific things like filmstocks when the whole system is collapsing and no one wants to know?

Melie's India Rubber Head swells for us again like an old friend as it has for a hundred years. I like Corrinne's observation that it represents the man's own swollen enthusiasm for the bizarre creation he has helped usher into existence. Both the medium and its message are fused here alongside the Prestonia shots - made to mean what they say.

Are the Cantrills attempting to bear a banner? The flag of experimental film as it faces its latest change? Surely all is not lost yet. Optimism and playfulness have always been important factors in their field. Maybe the message is just sour grapes. So what if cinema ends? Why not turn to another media or better still, invent one? Godard said that if cinema ended tomorrow, he would return to writing. After all there is always the word.

••hence..

The image of Corinne, Arthur, and Ivor in "Skin of Your Eye" as youthful publishers hand assembling copies of "Filmnotes" magazine struck me as a bit ironic and funny. The film shows them smiling knowingly at the camera as it tracks shakily around them. Micheal Lee is with them, as they brush their long hair out of their eyes and stare at us - at themselves - nearly twenty years later, mocking the futility of mannered attempts at film - politicisation in the cynical decade. The nihilist decade.

We can see as we arrive at La Mama the array of historic cinematic bric a brac layed out on display, later mirrored on the screen projected from the machine which at one point fails. Corinne apologises, and we are reminded that cinema the sideshow, the magic lantern, is real, mechanical, organic enough to engage us in every way - the familiar sound of the projector when it stops jolts us from our lulled meditation and we don't mind. We are already somewhere else....

The Cantrills are placing (perhaps and hopefully prematurely) flowers on the grave of a cinema which has all but disappeared. The cinema of the art class, ^{room} that of the different, the hard to access, the cinema of intelligence and sensitivity. Of wankiness and self indulgence. Of softness of poetry. Ivor climbs the Prestonia tower. Ivor's tower. Ivory tower?

I lament the fact that "experimentation" is no longer the rallying call to overthrow convention it once was. Indeed the establishment has found ways to co opt potential threats to its legitimacy and even film at its most risque is prone to be bought up ripped off and sold out like no other time in the medium's history. The one time radical agenda which people like De Bruyn, Lee, the Cantrills, and their international contemporaries like Hollis Frampton sought to establish has been eroded by the disillusionment of the '70s and all but razed in the '80s. Or maybe its just that the messages are less obvious and brazen as they once were.

Hence today the work by these experienced members of the underground represents a kind of establishment in itself. It is naturally reflective, inward-looking, refers to time passed, has time as its major focus.

I think mainly of work like De Bruyn's "Homecomings". Dirk takes himself back physically and spiritually to his point of origin and makes the event/experience real by filming it. Are we all to attain understanding of ourselves only when the films are made, processed and played back for us ??

(cont.)

When I add a bit more to "Onus On Us" or "Spinning Top" (a 16mm version) and play it back it becomes just that little bit easier to grasp the complexity of a day's worth of experience, no matter what it is I have filmed. The whole point is of course that the act of gaining a stake in understanding oneself is a potentially subversive act in a society where to claim one's own identity is discouraged at every stage of the game, especially where the media is concerned. Hence the slogans "seize the means" (of communication) "smash the state with super 8" etc. I diverge...

Considering "Projected Light" as fatalistic ponderings of mortality leaves a downbeat but vibrant accusation: If film is over we have had a role to play in its demise. Perhaps now more than ever the Onus to re-claim and even re-define the means of communication is on well, you know who.

After all this though, one can still feel the counter culture heart pumping away beneath the surface of "Projected Light" If the artists really have gone underground and let time work upon them (as the peice would have us believe) it has been not really to mourn, but to charge the batteries of their political magic lantern.

David Cox October/November 1988.

"Case Studies In Independent Production" is a fascinating and informative text on the production of independent films at various levels. One of the chapters is devoted to the Melbourne Super Eight Film Group, including profiles on Anne Marie Crawford, Maj Green, Bill Mousoulis and Chris Windmill.

**TAKING CARE OF
—B—U—S—I—N—E—S—S—**
A practical guide to independent film and video production

**Case Studies in
Independent Production**

The proud committee with their new dog. Note dog's colour change, a result of the dog's special amphetamine and steroid diet.

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Dog wins at odds of 100 to 1
Committee unavaible for comment

Some of Australia's best known independent titles are put under the microscope in this fascinating and revealing study. See how and why crucial decisions were made in development, financing, production and distribution. Titles featured include *Tender Hooks*, *Palisade*, *In Between*, *Salt*, *Saliva*, *Sperm and Sweat* and *How The West Was Lost*, while film/video makers include Philip Brophy, Jill Scott, Peter Callas, Laurie McInnes and the Marine Biologists. Chapters by Rolando Caputo, Susan Charlton, Sharon Connolly, Anna Grieve, Ross Harley, John Nicoil, Annabelle Sheehan and Andrew Scolio.

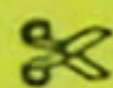
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Next Meeting NOVEMBER 8 7-30 PM

CHANGE OF VENUE. Only for the November open screening, we're back at the Glasshouse Meeting Room, RMIT (Swanston Street entrance; the room next to the Glasshouse Cinema) November 8th.

7.30PM SPECIAL EVENT

A SELECTION OF FILMS BY PAUL FLETCHER.
"One of the great S.8. auteurs of the early 80's"
INCLUDING;
Space Mutants, Mr Suzuki comes to Australia plus more...

To be introduced by Adrian Martin.

8.30PM OPEN SCREENING. BYO FILMS

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Matthew Rees 596 3710
Chris Windmill 531 2779

The review of A Pedestrians Guide to Collingwood as promised will be printed in the next newsletter due to my inability to type fast enough. - M.F.

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COMING UP... MIMA'S "EXPERIMENTA" FESTIVAL.

Info, 663 1953

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OPEN CHANNEL will be holding a DIRECTING DRAMA WORKSHOP held at Open Channel on November 18th, 19th and 20th. People with limited experience can learn how to direct drama from experienced directors through a number of practical exercises. Contact HELEN BOWMAN at Open Channel on 419 5111