

super eight

THE NEWSLETTER-MAGAZINE OF THE MELBOURNE SUPER-8 FILM GROUP No 5 July 1986



"In Production" - MALADAPTION NO 3 by Peter Napier will screen for the first time at the Group meeting- Tues 15th July. See pages 3 and 4 for more details of events.

MELBOURNE FILM FESTIVAL - SUPER 8 FORUM

The major impression I gained from the Super-8 Forum held at the State Film Centre on Wed 25th June was the extent to which the speakers involved - Tim Burns, Mark Titmarsh, Lind Zee Smith and Rolando Caputo - made little attempt to outline and analyse any patterns in Super-8 film-making. Rather, they loosely mentioned a New York "school" of film-making and, as is commonly done, referred to Super-8 as something relative to other cinema: not as a medium with clear goals and/or certain potentials. Any attitude towards Super-8 became most apparent with the concomitant screening of Smith's film/video entitled "Tripe".

The sound of the video was raised at certain times, prompted by Smith, and this occurred most notably when the two film actors were having sex. The attention of the whole audience was diverted from what Caputo was saying, if not already, to the action on the screen. It may sound like a great joke. Something to talk about. It nevertheless revealed an attitude towards Super-8 that is not only tautological, but equally as limited. Super-8 is seen as a censor evading cinema: one that aims to shock, presuming that the audience needs to be awoken. What this dangerously does is worship the effect - something which when examined always carries with it its own defining line. Is to walk out of the cinema an effect? Is boredom an effect? And does this, in the attempt to outline our history of the cinema really only point to the trivialised complexities of Psychology? The Audience (singular) is presumed to act in a knee-jerk fashion, validating the aim of the film.

This attitude seems to permeate much Super-8 film-making and seemed to lie behind the very inarticulate points raised particularly by Smith and Burns. Do these men have any ideal for Super-8, can they talk about it, or does this supposedly dismiss the grounds upon which they are film-makers? The major problem, I believe, exists when the effect is placed above all. I see a medium pointing only to itself; its place within cinema and nothing else. A place that is as obscure (mistaken to be depth) as the personalities of the people it presumes to sit before it, as their place in cinema is seen, finding focus only in the fact that they are focussed on the screen. Unwilling to make a stance, create an ideal, or address the complexities of living, this attitude places itself below effect. Here boredom is as justifiable as transformation. Expression and justification become one. Goals point to nothing but a blatant truth, one that is as old as cinema itself - "when there is a focus, of course there must be reactions". Super-8 appears, in the attitude of this forum, to find its only place within a stripped cinematic truth, one that goes without saying - a film, an audience, a number of reactions, therefore a justification.

- Darron Davies.

MELBOURNE FILM FESTIVAL

This year's Melbourne Film Festival had three programs of Super-8 material - from London, New York, and Australia. Held at the State Film Centre, all three programs were well attended, but the New York one (two separate sessions) almost filled the house. Which is not surprising really - the psyche of New York holds undoubtedly more interest than that of London or Melbourne. But that doesn't mean, of course, that the best films are the ones from New York. Still...

Almost all the New York films were engaging, some even terrific. Only one film, Loisaida Lusts, seemed really trashy - it managed to offend even me. Most of the other films pursued similar interests in pornographic, violent, low-life living, but at least they did it with imagination and power - The Manhattan Love Suicides by Richard Kern for example. Then there's Bette Gordon's amazing, breath-taking warm-up to Variety, Anybody's Woman. The film-makers Tim Burns and Lindzee Smith, who attended the Festival and were part of the Super-8 forum, offered an engaging filmed play Ruffian on the Stair. Dead on my Arm by Cassandra Stark is quite different again; not much on the surface, it has a somewhat mean, deadly undercurrent to it. The pick of the lot, however, is Playboy, by Tessa Hughes-Freeland. Using only found footage of boxing and cock-sucking, among other things, its overall effect is strange and quite moving. It's one of the most mystical films I've seen, a film where "the images themselves become more important for their cinematic impact than for their meaning" (the director).

Most of the films in the Australian program have had screenings before - only three of the films had their premiere screening: Anne-Marie Crawford's Underground

(if last month's Super-8 meeting isn't counted), James Clayden's The Ghost Paintings, and my Physical World. And it was also the first Melbourne screening of Catherine Lowing's brilliant Knife in the Head, Spooky. What can I say about the Australian material? It's clearly superior, in many kinds of ways, to the New York or London stuff (I may be biased, but I'm not blind). The attraction of the foreign shouldn't stop us from recognizing what's in our own back yard. Legion and (The) Taking (Of) Place are classics, while Yes it Is by Virginia Hilyard makes me cry every time I see it - I can't imagine a film being more beautiful. Anne-Marie Crawford's Underground comes close though - in a different kind of way. These aren't films, they're miracles - pity the man who underrates Australian Super-8; a culture of splendour in/and exploration.

The third part of our Super-8 came from London, and the less said about this package, the better. The London films proved to be very uninspired and miserable. Oh well, two out of three ain't bad.

Once again I may be biased, but the Super-8 sessions were one of the few highlights of the Festival overall. Only three films were better: Laleen Jayamanne's A Song Of Ceylon (which was shot on Super-8 anyway); the Godard/Mieville video Soft and Hard, a sublime adventure; and an extraordinary masterpiece of which the cinema has hardly seen of before - Raul Ruiz's City of Pirates. Apart from these three things, the Super-8 was the best thing at the Festival (believe me, this is not some crazy hobby horse I'm riding - it's true.)

** A selection of some of the Australian, (and possibly some of the New York) films will be playing at ACCA (Australian Centre for Contemporary Art), Dallas Brooks Drive, Melbourne, on Thursday, July 10, at 8:00 p.m. Admission is free.

Bill Mousoulis

PERFORMANCE ART PIECE - 12/6/86

Marcus Bergner and Michael Buckley of "arfarf" performed live with their film at our June screening. Discussion with the film-makers was on an unfortunately formal question and answer level. Those of us who liked the piece found it difficult to show that in the way we asked questions and I'm sorry I didn't just yell out: "Hey, that was Great!!". I hope I can make up for that now in print.

We are seeing too little genuinely experimental film-work in the sense of film-makers exploring new ground rather than being just unconventional for the sake of it! The Bergner-Buckley piece was exactly the kind of work that I hope our Group can be a good host environment for. It was a highly spontaneous improvised live performance of poetry, speech and sound, using only voice and trumpet, performed to a screening of super-8 footage showing a talent for bizarre composition and frenetic camera movement. The performance was lively and it was fun as the film-makers played outrageously with the relationship between sound and image and their own presence. My personal reactions during the performance varied wildly. I felt parts of the work fired in all directions at random, without hitting any targets, but other moments "clicked" magically, and overall I was delighted that it was happening. My thanks to Marcus Bergner and Michael Buckley.

- John Calder

"arfarf" including Bergner and Buckley can be experienced at the "Fringe Series Screening" on Mon July 14th, 7pm, Grierson Cinema, \$3.00

WANTED TO BUY:

Enlarger stand, or broken enlarger for conversion to animation stand. Also small desk (any cond - pref rough and cheap) for same project. Also Super-8 sound projector - pref twin-track, dual gauge or stereo. Ph John 4281072

WANTED TO RENT:

Studio space - pref E.St Kilda or near. Or interested in share arrangement - Ph Peter 534-1248

FOR SALE

Sankyo Sound camera XL620. With lap dissolve, hardly used. \$300. Ph Barry 818 7442.

GROUP MEETING - TUES 15th July

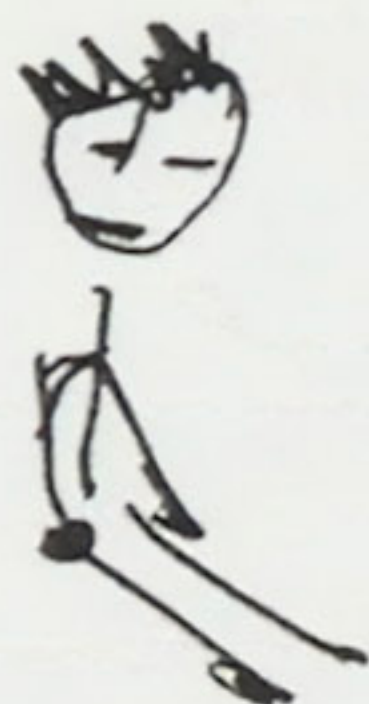
RMIT MEETING ROOM (next to Glasshouse Cinema)

WORKSHOP 7:30 p.m

FILMS ON SUPER-8 8:30 p.m ... Including..

<u>Maladaption no 3</u>	by Peter Napier
<u>Physical World</u>	by Bill Mousoulis
<u>One Night in Chipppo</u>	by Nick Donkin
<u>Link Camp</u>	by Nick Donkin

Also room to B.Y.O film but pref register it first with Bill Mousoulis 419 6562.



Acting for Super-8

Workshop - 7:30p.m - Tues 15 July

A workshop on the actor's contribution to the film with ideas from actors on how they feel the film-maker can get the best from them. A step back away from our obsession with the hardware of film-making to time out on what is often the neglected vital centre - the performance or event in front of the camera..

This topic could spark a workshop 5 years long! In just one hour we hope we can expose you to a few new ideas, working methods, concepts.

Like:

- * Who are actors and where do you find them?
- * Developing a script by workshopping it with your actors.

The workshop leaders:

Suzanne Chapman - actress and drama teacher, recently appeared in "Who the Hell is Eunice Burns, Anyway?" (play) at ROAR Gallery.

Kathi Sands - actress and drama student, has played lead roles in 2 recent Group co-op productions.

LAST MONTH'S WORKSHOP - ANIMATION

The film has started to come in from processing and the results are good! See it screened Tues 15th July.

*TITLE**TITLE**TITLE**TITLE**TITLE**TITLE**TITLE*

A first version of a Group Title is now available on unstriped film. The sound-stock version will follow as soon as possible. The title is free to members.

We decided after much argument to use only the group name in the title and not include words such as "thanks to", "facilities by" or "presents". This should enable film-makers to acknowledge any connection with the Group by splicing it in at the beginning or end of a film.

The "8" is an animated computer graphic.

THIS IS (ALMOST) TODAY ON SUPER-8

For the last meeting I was going to show a film entitled This is Today on Super-8. A one-minute film, we see John Calder pointing at objects with a rolled-up newspaper, saying "This is today's building", "These are today's flowers", etc. He then rolls down the newspaper and says "And this is today's newspaper." The camera zooms in on the paper's date: Tuesday, June 12, the day of the meeting.

The point of the film is that you can make a film on Super-8 really quickly if you want. You can shoot in the morning and premier it that night - well, almost. If you take your film to Kodak in Coburg by 10, you can get it back at 4. It didn't quite work for me on June 12, but it works most times: something to keep in mind, anyway.

Also remember that the tax-exemption form available from the Super-8 Group is not only for stock; it can cut a substantial portion of the cost off of new equipment.

Bill Mousoulis



GLASSHOUSE THEATRE ◆

RMIT UNION HOUSE
360 SWANSTON STREET
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

THURSDAY JULY 17
5.00 PM AND 8.00 PM

FRIDAY JULY 18
5.00 PM AND 8.00 PM

SATURDAY JULY 19
8.00 PM

JULY
EXHIBITION

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR - \$5.00 & \$3.00

MIMA INC. Box 2321V, GPO Melbourne
3001, Australia. Telephone (03) 663 1953

Alternate Mondays 7:00 p.m.

OPEN SCREENINGS

8.4.7

July 7, 21 Aug. 4, 18
Sept. 1, 15

FILM & VIDEO

\$1 DONATION.



SERIES SCREENINGS

SELECTED PROGRAMMES OF INDEPENDENT FILM WORK.

July 14: Film/performance
28: The Films of John Calder
Aug. 11: U.S. visiting artist Richard Lerman
25: Three Film makers on the rise:
Matthew Rees,
Anne-Marie Crawford,
Nick Ostrovskis.
Sept. 8 Adrian Martin Selections.

FRINGE NETWORK LTD, 201 BRUNSWICK ST. FITZROY 419 9549

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This newsletter-magazine is published monthly by The Melbourne Super-8 Film Group

Contributions are welcome

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

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Registered by Australia Post
Publication No VBG 7570

if undeliverable return to:
Melbourne Super 8 Film Group
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Richmond North 3121

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Vic Aust
3121

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