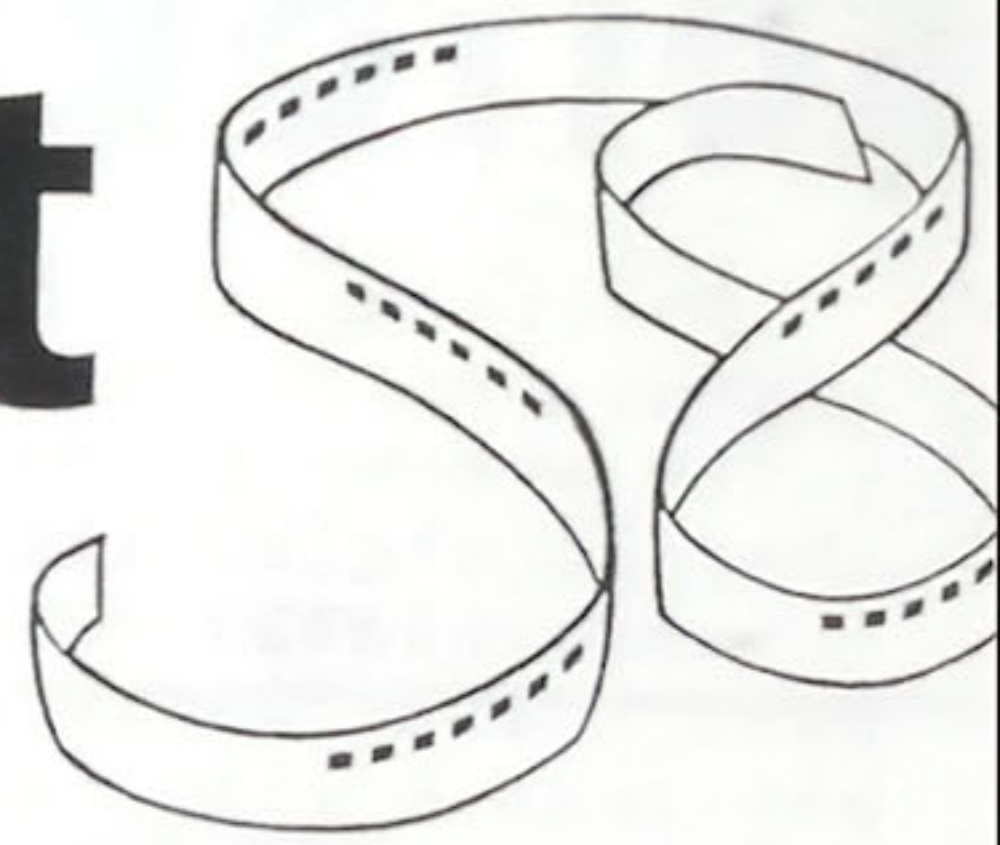


# Super Eight

Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group



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PUBLIC TV AND SUPER 8  
FILM MAKER'S FORUM  
S8 PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS  
CU: THE FACE IN FILM

Issue 53 November 1999



# EDITORIAL

Greetings optic auteurs and divergent professionals! I have had quite a time trying to cram all these contributions between the covers. READER RESPONSE has been most enthusiastic and is impelling not only a wide level of discussion and cross-fertilisation within the film group, but is also entrrenching our position as Melbourne's most magnetic and exciting 8mm film makers and screeners.

NEW MEMBERS will also find the FILM WORKSHOPS an invaluable course in which to school that precocious child- the New Film. It seems that no sooner does a vaguely interested auteur join the group, than he/she feels a film welling to the surface. Not-so-new members will also benefit from honing skills and solving persistent bugbears.

On the topic of MEMBERSHIP- I have noticed a disparity of WOMEN in the group which can only limit the perspectives that the diopter can bring. DON'T BE SHY! Ensure the patriachal power complex remains a stranger within the Glasshouse's doors. You don't have to storm the citadel, just come and JOIN.

T Danko in his recent article (see p12) notes that, "The debate in the newsletter seems to centre around the correct translation/ interpretation of Super 8". My PURPOSE has not been to impose my own aesthetic or use the newsletter as a vehicle for hidden agendas. I seek to:

- (1) make the newsletter as exciting, divers, interesting and informative as possible;
- (2) help light the fires of filmic inspiration and encourage a wider audience for new films;
- (3) encourage networking between S8 and related groups such as Public TV, MIMA, other Film Groups, actors, sound professionals, etc;
- (4) contribute to a burgeoning interest in the medium and hence,

to ensure the accessibility and material production of S8 film. Apocalyptic prophets beware!

Thanks again to our prolific CONTRIBUTORS. Also I remind the Dear Reader that B&W GRAPHICS AND LAYOUT ASSISTANCE would be greatly appreciated.

As Steve Ball has not yet returned from lands afar, the "Sydney Super 8 Scene" article will appear next month.

Prospective contributors are also invited to take their work and ideas to the Open Screening so we can discuss them directly.

See you there!

Ed. ●

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COVER- MZ.

NEXT MONTH'S TOPIC: "Which has the most relevance for film criticism- academic analysis or subjective impressionism?"

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Tel:  
690-2552

## Cornelius Music Productions

57, Waratah St., Oakleigh Sth., 3167.

Composer  
Dale Cornelius

Dale is a professional composer and musician with diverse experience in sound production. He has his own studio and also has access to Music Effects Studios in South Yarra

"My purpose is to combine with others in a creative environment where I don't have the restrictions of the film & TV industry. I am offering my services and abilities free of charge provided that the people involved with me are professional in attitude and approach"...

Experience S8 film makers are invited to contact Dale at the above number.

# EQUIPMENT

All items are for borrowing unless otherwise stated.

Everything to be booked with Bill on 429 9847.

BRAUN NIZO 6080 sound camera (\$15 per day)  
sharp lens; intervalometer; wide angle lens; crystal sync pulse; various speeds.

BRAUN NIZO 6080 sound camera (\$15 per day)  
sharp lens; intervalometer; wide angle lens; crystal sync pulse; various speeds.

SANKYO sound camera  
basic sound camera, 18 or 24 fps.

DAWN BROWN MEMORIAL CAMERA:  
CANON 814 silent camera  
excellent camera, but silent

ELMO ST-180 projector (\$5 per day)  
twin-track, basic, but solid, machine.

MILLER Junior tripod  
currently without pan handle

small tripod

screen

2 editor/viewers

2 WURKER splicing machines

WURKER splicing tapes, 50 per pack, \$6 per pack.

Thanks to Sonia Leber for arranging the donation of the Canon camera to the group. Dawn Brown lectured in Communications in RMIT, and died recently.

Also thanks to Brendan T. Murray for arranging the donation of some lights to the group from actor Michael Pate. Hopefully we'll have them in working order soon. Check with Bill on the progress of that if you need them soon.

## MORE SHOOTING THAN IN GOODFELLAS

A short note from admin. headquarters,  
by Bill Mousoulis.

Firstly, I want to look back a bit. The Super-8 Group was formed in November 1985, making it now exactly 5 years old. Having been there from the very start, it feels somewhat strange to me overall. When I took over the running of the RMIT Super-8 Club in July '85, all I wanted to do was set up regular (monthly, not whenever-we're-organized) Open Screenings and a monthly newsletter. It was all natural and exciting. But, although there was an active committee then (of which Matthew Rees still remains), even as late as August 1986 I had to organize things on my own. You're not going to believe this, but not only was the inaugural Super-8 festival solely funded by me, the committee wouldn't let me put the Super-8 Group's name to it, because they felt the festival would be a failure.

The rest is history: since that first festival the Super-8 Group has had a visible presence in the Australian independent film community. (Of course, a lot of people knowing us doesn't mean they actually like us. For many, we are a "club" or "just Super-8" or "experimental film-makers". And still others praise, but it is a lip-service.)

I feel strange when I hear people talking about "the Super-8 Group" on the radio or wherever, as if it's some kind of established institution. I find that funny: what, these casual screenings we have? The profile of this year's festival (mentioned on TV, in newspapers, etc.) struck me somewhat (my response being neither positive or negative.)

I thought I was going to quit the Super-8 Group just now, at the end of this year - the administration position, but also go off the committee. My reasoning: I wanted my life for myself. Rather than organize screenings, etc. for other film-makers, I wanted to concentrate on my own work, to be a fully-fledged "artist", to be free. For those of you who don't know, I've made a few short films on 16mm, not just the many on Super-8, and am now working on my first feature, which the AFC are positive and encouraging about. I could spend the whole of my time from now on just on that. But, as Springsteen once said, "I want it all!"

We're going to try to set up an office for the Super-8 Group next year, which will be good if, for example, my feature goes into production it will allow someone else to administer for the months I'm away. It would be good anyway to "open up" the Group in this way - hopefully it'll make it more communal.

Anyway, I think this is a roundabout way of me saying "Hey, this group's FOR REAL." What's going on out there? Are people making films or what? We had a number of entries, a record number actually, for the festival, but the last two Open Screenings have been noticeably bare.

Already pencilled in for the next screening are a few new films - 3 a.m. by Mark Zenner, Astral Plane by Jenny Pignataro, and my return to film-making after being in the self-imposed exile land of existential angst for six months, sex/dialogue/empathy: 38. Hopefully all of these will be edited in time.

But what about others? Pardon me for mentioning names. What happened to the Thunder Can Man, Nick? He was going to bring something to the last screening. Give him a nudge, Nick boy! And what about the film you did together David and James? Francois, have you re-done your splices yet? Damien: don't just talk about that little film - finish it. And

Harry - why don't you show one of those 250 reels you've shot? Richard: still experiencing film-maker's block? And Anna, you with your keenness that reminded me of, well, me. Shot anything yet? Ah, a question to be posed.

One only lives once, and Super-8 spells ACTION. No waiting around for grants to come through!

For those of you just starting off, or with the desire to make a film but not the inclination, inspiration, or skill, take note of the Workshop we're offering this month. Matthew will be conducting it (spread over two days), with help from Jenny. Doing a simple workshop like this in 1983 is the only film training I myself have ever had, and, as I said, I'm now (hopefully) about to make a feature film.

People should ring me if they've got any questions on anything, if they need information or help. I'll do the best I can.

Thanks to those several people who renewed their memberships this past month. I've found some time to send out renewal notices to a number of other people. Please do the right thing! Looking at the books, we're not exactly under budget, so please help. (It is things like 16-page newsletters that make us spend money.)

Finally, if you've changed address, please inform me, as I'm not clairvoyant.

Cheers.

## OPEN SCREENING FEATURE:

Programme Notes for "3 A.M."  
a film by M Zenner, 35 mins,  
colour.

Strangers, companions in deep  
nightmare, they pass in dark-  
ness, circle each other, make  
futile attempts at contact,  
building Kwai-river bridges  
of word-dust destined to  
drop silently, and unseen.  
Solitary to their very  
roots and unable to ad-  
mit it, they glance,  
murmuring phrases  
never to be sung,  
celebrated or quo-  
ted. You can't quo-  
te nothing, or sing  
it even.

Erect, upright, aspiring,  
pointing force-lines to  
blue eternity and a place  
in the sun - the honest po-  
lity of citizens in the spot-  
light of church and state, like  
moths who get burned and think that  
compromise is "growth". The greenest  
lawns - for the wettest worms: their  
home and camouflage.

Narrative situation and pattern  
react on each other; by assoc-  
iation, a meaning grows, an em-  
otional significance that rev-  
erberates in the compositional  
formation, the recurring 2 or  
3-shot sequence, the color,  
etc. The form, accumulating  
meaning to the point of ar-  
ousing it all by itself, so  
takes on the character of a  
symbol. The longer the film,  
the more certain this is to  
be the case.

An exact, precisely-fulfillable  
intention beforehand is useless:  
there would be nothing to create.

But then why bother? What would an  
aim, a goal be, that was a foregone  
conclusion, already attained? Answer:  
paralysis. Such a goal is actually un-  
fulfillable, since there is no space be-  
tween it and yourself.

It is always the divergences from an  
original idea that have some life in  
them and provide the real creative,  
i.e. cinematic interest in a work;  
the embodied work is only recogni-

zable as different to its initial  
idea. From it, I begin; at it, I  
do not arrive. "3 A.M." was not  
something to be arrived at. Nor

should it be. Everywhere and in  
any season, 3 A.M. is dark; the  
"white nights" of polar latit-  
udes bypass it completely. To  
all, in all languages, it says  
"darkness".  
"3 A.M." The letters "A.M." stand  
for "ante-meridian". Ante means "be-  
fore" or "preceding" the meridian point  
in a given time-zone. The figure 3 shows  
that the zone's longitudinal center is  
0900 hours away from axial alignment, or  
a distasteful minimum, to the sun. And 1500  
hours past the previous such alignment. But  
this is not the only meaning of A.M.

When the M is written as an upside-down W  
alongside the A, three gothic steeples  
are outlined - hence 3 A.M. (a point  
not without significance for those  
familiar with Melbourne's skyline  
at its northern and eastern van-  
tages).

The third (3 again!) and least im-  
portant meaning of "3 A.M." is its  
significance as the title of my lat-  
est film - in which, however, steeples  
do play a minor role; and the designated  
time, a major one. A good part of "3 A.M."  
is dark, with rich, deep, alert shadows, tin-  
ted and tainted with the spectrality of what  
they shroud: people who cannot bear to see  
themselves (or be seen, same thing) in full  
daylight. Does it have psychology, depth,  
a "soul"? Only to the extent that Ekta-  
chrome has one. None but what you pro-  
vide.

# TECHNICAL Q & A

From Peter West's column in Mak-  
ing Better Movies (UK), May 1986.

## Silma Spares

*Can you tell me of anyone who might be able to supply me with a drive belt for the old Silma Sonik 8 and/or any other spares?*

P. WILSON, Exeter.

Servicing of at least some of the older Silma projectors has been taken over by Technical Services A-V Ltd. of 2 Revere Drive, Granby Estate, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Bucks. (Tel. 0908-73366) and I hope that they may be able to supply you with the drive belt for the Sonik 8 projector, and other spares.

Should they be unable to help, you may find that a large local Hi-Fi repairer may have a suitable belt from spares supplied for various tape or cassette recorders - take the original one with you when enquiring. (This assumes that the old belt is a reasonably plain, elasticated type and not a toothed or special vee belt).

## Re-Chargeable Batteries

*Would you tell me if it is in order to use re-chargeable batteries in a cine camera? Mine happens to be an Elmo 612SXL, but I take it the same rule would apply for any make.*

P.G. MARTIN, Princes Risborough, Bucks.

Yes, it should be quite in order to use re-chargeable batteries (nickel-cadmium type) in cine cameras such as yours.

In fact they are most suitable for such high current applications. While the terminal off-load voltage is lower (at 1.2-1.25V) than manganese or zinc-carbon types (1.5V), the ni-cads have a much lower internal resistance, and so when loaded with the heavy currents typically drawn by cine cameras (some 400-600

mA) the actual working voltage is near-enough the same. And with such high currents drawn from the R20 cells the ni-cads will soon show a saving in cost over Mn1500s, even when counting in the cost of a charger, if you are a reasonably active film maker.

There are only two small problems: the capacity of a ni-cad is only about half of that of a manganese-alkaline cell of the same size when used in such applications as these, so you may need two sets if you want to do a lot of filming, since they will only last half as long (one can charge while the other is in use). Furthermore, ni-cads tend to self-discharge during storage, so should be brought up to full charge every month or two if you may want to use them suddenly without warning, or else charged up before shooting (if you have enough warning to allow you to do this overnight, say). The latter is a better option, really, since many makers advise against charging partly run-down cells — they should be fully discharged (to about 1.0V/cell) first, otherwise they may not take a full charge after a few cycles (the so-called memory effect). Other makers dispute this.

### Post-Edit Striping

*I have always used Agfa 40 Plus film with great satisfaction. However, now that they have stopped making it, I am going to use their 40 silent film and have the film striped after editing.*

*What I would like to know is this: will post-edit striping adhere satisfactorily over the stereo tape splices that I use, and is it possible that the sound quality might be better owing to the fact that the striping will be applied continuously over the splices, thus hopefully preventing the slight 'bumps' at splices which I've suffered from in the past?*

*Finally, could you recommend a firm that do very high quality sound striping? Although my budgets have to be low, I am quite happy to pay a bit more for top quality sound.*

JOHN A. UPSTONE, London SW20 8AQ.

If you apply your stereo splice patches properly, there should be no problem in striping the film after editing. After all, they leave the track area clear so that the stripe can adhere to the film base. However, if you misplace them then you could find one of the stripes (probably the narrower balance one) attempting to lift away as the film is run, since it cannot be bonded to the polyester patch. So be careful with your splicing!

In most projectors there should be less of a tendency for a dropout to occur if you stripe over a splice for the reason you mention. But it does rather depend on the projector — the film tends to 'hinge' at the tape splice and this can upset its passage as the splice approaches the head on some machines, and give either a 'bump' or some wow. One cannot generalise.

Since you are not trying to match pre-striped film (which is always paste striped) I think you will be satisfied with the laminated stripe applied by Cresta Electronics, for instance. Paste striping is carried out by Magnetic Film Services and this matches level better to pre-striped film, but in general is less flat and noisier than laminated.

"There's only two traks in Super-8. You can do simple things but not really complex things".

Super-8 sound is recorded on a sound stripe composed of a main stripe for live sound and a balance stripe for music or effects. The limitations of two-trak sound can be eluded by post-producing sound through a mixer and recording onto the balance stripe through the projector. Generally, post-produced sound can be of a higher quality and complexity if done with care

To press a page with thoughts undreamed  
Head to arm, a gulf beyond  
From shouting shadows, a fragment gleaned  
A place to hide and yet be seen.

Or the snooter's eye, flickering cut  
Dicing life in mind-sized hunks  
Through periscope to the desert scream  
A space to soar with God and machine.

Chroniclers, digesters, reality confecters  
Lust to make the ubiquitous flinch  
From atom's life of distant being  
A race to bridge the void with seeing.

## FILM MAKER'S FORUM

The Film Maker's Forum was held at the Glasshouse on Sep. 2 as part of the Festival. The committed and vaguely interested were invited to listen and discuss the views and experiences of three long-time Super-8 artists; Simon Cooper, Richard Touhy and Marie Craven (hereafter SC, RT and MC).

The Forum venue was packed with over sixty interested auteurs contributing to a lively discussion about "Super-8 Film Making in the Nineties". Below is an edited text of the proceedings which will be serialised in future issues.

### PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS...

Bill Mousoulis (BM): What are some of the limitations of S8?

RT: The first limitation has to be that you're funding (the film) yourself...

Aside from obvious ones like the splices — everyone knows about the 18 frame sound delay. But more complex problems, and problems that I'm starting to find a lot more inhibiting are to do with the technology itself. Super-8 film obviously being reversal has a lot of problems associated with narrative... they could be, in a particular scene you have to maintain your exposure. That's not impossible but it's difficult. You can't print around it at all. The sound level, when you go from close up to wider shots. In a scene you may have to move the microphone. How will that affect the sound recording onto your S8 sound film? Obviously when you intercut those two shots that's going to create some problems. Obviously the sound mixing is a real problem. There's only two traks in S8.

You can do simple things but not really complex things. Not things that have to be synchronised at all. Simple things would be the laying down of an atmosphere or music...Once you get to putting down a lot of sounds that have to be in synch you have to rock the film too much through the projector and this gives you too many scratches. And also when you do record sound on the projector, once you turn off you get this 'squelch' on the track...Another one is to do with focus. Its not easy to focus with a S8 camera. The problem with the optical system is the area image focussing system they have. What that means basically is that, you have a split-image in the view-finder to focus things with which is quite good but its a little bit hit and miss. And playing with things like depth-of-field; say, in some sort of two shot if you want one person in focus and another not in focus. These are things that we have very little control over and its very difficult for us to predict what these things are going to be like. By aerial image- it means that the image you see in the view-finder isn't actually falling on a piece of ground glass like on other formats like 16 or 35mm. But its just floating in the air. The reason a problem arises is because your eye can shift the level at which it focuses at. There's no lock-down plane. So you tend to have to shoot things twice. Say, first, I'd like to do it like this. Then shoot it a bit wider so you have less problems with focus...

BM: Like what happens is that, you know, because its a narrative film, everytime you see a little 'glitch' or something you're reminded that its a film. The fact that someone has done it and put it together. Whereas when you're watching a mainstream film it just goes along smoothly and fluently. One other question I want to ask you in regards to this is to do with the acting. Whenever you have actors in S8, I don't know whether its because of the image. Like it always seems to come accross through a vacuum. Like it doesn't seem actual.

RT: Yeah. I think that's got a lot to do with the skills of the director. I wouldn't blame the medium for that. But these a

are things that have to be learnt...

BM: Because in your film (Love Life) for me, a few of the actors are really good and the rest aren't. Which means because you're making it on S8 and everyone's donating their time- Richard just didn't have enough time to do rehearsals and all that so it was just kind of left up to the actors.

RT: With a narrative on S8, the film maker, the director, is really the only person that seems to stay with the production from start to finish. Other people tend to come and go a bit. That's really a lot of weight to carry. There's not one other person that is going to be there everyday except the film maker...

MC: Actually I worked as a sound recordist in one of Chris Windmill's films and he gave us a really official document saying that each of us had 1/56th share in case the film made a huge profit.

RT: I think that's a good idea because it gives the crew some obligation towards you apart from just friendship.

MC: I think most of us just laughed, actually...

#### OPEN FORUM

BM: At this point I'd like to throw it open to the audience. If you've got any particular comments or questions about the stuff we have been discussing, because I know for probably a lot of you, you may be interested in doing S8 film making because its the easiest and most accesible. So for a lot of you, these three (SC, RT, MC) are probably more advanced than where you are now...We're here now to give you any information about S8.

Julian Dahl (JD): This is a general question to any of the three that feel like responding. For what ideas or modes of expression do you think S8 is most appropriate? Does it lend itself towards a certain filmic attitude?...

MC: The home movie one is one that has been said for many years- S8 started out as home movies and maybe it has some kind of inherent relation to that kind of mode of operation. I find myself drawn to that..

JD: Is it limited by the sort of stigma of home movies or revelatory, personal

perspectives? Is that inhibiting the transport of wider thematic potential?

MC: People still use it (S8) in music videos and stuff, as kind of a stylistic thing. I mean, that's quite different.

JD: Maybe Richard, do you have a comment?

RT: Just 'Yeah'.

MC: What, do you think its limited because its got a home movie history?

RT: No, not at all. I was agreeing with you not him (Obviously!). Yeah. No. That doesn't discourage people who want to make films, you know. Some 35mm filmmakers incorporate S8.

MC: Yeah. Paul Cox is a famous example.

JD: Could you cite any other examples where the 8mm gauge has infiltrated commercial film or TV?

MC: Wim Wenders, Paris Texas. He's got a kind of home movie in that film. There's actually quite a lot of film makers that have used S8.

RT: There's other guys like Caravaggio.

MC: Derek Jarman. Its kind of real art-house cinema thing to do. Like its not really mainstream. Steven Spielberg wouldn't use it.

BM: Yeah, but he started off making his films in S8.

MC: That's right. Sam Raimi, Evil Dead. He started off making S8...

TUNE IN next month for further probing questions, deep revelations and banal banter in MS8 53.

# experimenta

A major survey of experimental film and video art to be held in Melbourne from November 20th - December 3rd, 1990 Modern Image Makers Association Inc (MIMA) 's bi-ennial multi-media event, **EXPERIMENTA**, represents the most comprehensive and exciting program of experimental film and video art yet seen in Australia.

Highlights of the dynamic 2-week event include works by Australian film and video artists *MELANIE EL MIR*, *GABRIELLE FINNANE*, *TED COLLESS*, *ROBERT NERY*, and a *PAUL WINKLER* retrospective.

Among prominent performance artists are *STELARC*, *WILLIAM YANG*, the *TYNDALLS* and *SHELLEY LASICA*.

The **cinema section**, for example, takes in various forms of experimental narrative involving themes such as sexual politics, popular culture, death and violence. Other areas cover new approaches to documentary, recent trends in animation, as well as one program which deals with those filmmakers who are preoccupied with structure and form. Several established names in Australian experimental cinema, such as the Cantrills, Michael Buckley, and John Nixon, will feature new work. Emerging film makers such as Virginia Hilyard, Chris Windmill, Robert Nery and Ilana Shulman also make a strong contribution. Among the highlights from overseas are 2 programs presented by french filmmaker Christian Lebrat; the first a survey of '**Recent French avant garde**', and the second an historical screening of films from the '**Lettrist**' movement, none of which have been exhibited before in this country. Leading British video artist, Tina Keane will present her **DIVER'S SERIES** and curate **INSIDE THE BOX**, a program which takes a critical look at 'New attitudes to British television', illustrated by examples of Channel 4's one-minute '**intervention**' videos. Most of the cinema section will be screened at the State Film Theatre.

Special events include a program of Canadian experimental film, curated and presented by Ellie Epp, at the Alliance Francaise. French filmmaker Christian Lebrat will deliver a keynote address at The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art on "LETTRISM - the unknown avant garde."

Other events at **EXPERIMENTA** include a series of seminars at the Alliance Francaise in St Kilda, which will engage with critical issues in the area of film/video art in general.



ONE FISH TWO FISH  
RED FISH BLUE FISH



A dedication to Dr Seuss, Dada and the joy of creative play.

People don't understand it, some argue it's an obscene obsession, even a perverse fetish but whether alone, on holiday, happy or depressed, hungover, tired or broke, hail, rain, blue skies above, in the car, on the train or even in the bath, I have to look through my little Cannon, select the world I want to see and shoot.

That's not the end of it, only the beginning!

Looking through the viewfinder, foolin' 'round with the focus - listening to the winding of the film - I'm lost for words except one. LURVE!

The anticipation of waiting for the precious yellow and red package from the Lab. getting it to the editor viewer for an excited but clandestine peak, falling straight back into the magical world initially selected, well to quote Bill...

"it's love, maybe not the sticky messy, complicated kind, but nonetheless, LOVE".

The relationship endures eternal hurdles such as:




- \* the waiting, just waiting for the return of film from the clutches of Kodak
- \* when Kodak manages, without much effort it seems to consistently leave blue tram lines down the film
- \* running out of splicing tape and sanity
- \* getting really muddled in the middle of editing
- \* jamming film in carnivorous or Shonky HAM and EGGS (Hanimex) projectors
- \* synchronising sound with picture

Despite the obvious hassles, maybe the relationship is made more enduring because of them. Yet for all the apparent "hitches" who can deny the parental pleasure of reliving every memorable, magical, Super 8 movie moment when seeing the "offspring".

jenny pignataro

October, 1990.





CAFE

# NOTES



## The Journals of a Film-maker

by Bill Mousoulis

Presented here are some notes I took in various coffeeshops around town during the latter part of October. I find that my thoughts these days are scattered, ephemeral even. And when meaning inevitably does arise from accumulation, and clarity from repetition, everything is still in flux, magically changing at every moment. That is the curse of the adventurer.

I hope these journals are not driven by solipsistic fancy. As much as I uphold subjectivity, I still believe that we are all the same (with just different hereditary and environmental traits, and maybe different 'free will' capacities), but, more importantly, I believe we are all in this (life) together. I will never forget Springsteen's words: "Nobody wins unless everybody wins." That is a guiding light and a shining example.

OCTOBER 16, Hollywood Palace, Richmond:

Is saying "everyone has their reasons" perhaps too charitable a view of people and their actions? An ugly, all-encompassing justification? And is it misanthropic to cast a sceptical, critical eye on people? With whom or what does responsibility lie?

These are questions avoided like the plague in the current general climate of unmerciful subordination and indifference. The opposite of responsibility is not irresponsibility as such, but a fluid, tempting solace-impulse. The shallowness of modern living is evinced by its focus on instant gratification, which is constantly fuelled by the production of cultural artefacts and positions. New Ageism has even made self-examination a process to be consumed (the ironically-titled "Self-help" books.)

A bankruptcy of ideas feeds an every-man-for-himself attitude and vice-versa. "No-one cares, why should I?" If a silly term 'Post-Modernism' can define the 80's, cannot another silly term 'Re-Innocence' define the 90's? If we all hope for something, it will not materialize; if we see it, it will. To be a slave to the superficial pleasure-impulse is like chasing one's tail. Everyone has their reasons, torturers too, but we need to examine those reasons ...

But it is difficult looking inward; and rare. It is not encouraged, and it is even knowingly discouraged. Vested interests play a big part. For example, imagine if film culture revolved around people making and showing Super-8 films instead of attending big cinema complexes. Yes, it's hard to imagine. But that dream is sublime, and the improbability of its actualization is no reason to give up on it. Or maybe it is. Whatever, let us examine our reasons, seriously, committedly, unendingly.

OCTOBER 18, Galleon, St.Kilda:

An artist has no home. Craig McGregor writes that "to make our cities fit to live in for everyone, we all have to become politicians first and homebodies last." He also writes that "art is a social act." The problem with cinema, and it is a substantial problem, is the emphasis laid upon the marketable side of a film. Film-makers tend to eventually either be co-opted into a commercial way of thinking or they give up. A third option is strength, composure, diligence.

Art is enlivened by the pain of defeat. Defeat can arise only from ambition, the am-

bition of a glorious dream. Pain is a numbing experience, the ultimate leveller - a slap in the face to all positions of security. Beliefs are subject to disintegration - that is the cruel bugbear of faith. (The irony of life: death.) But better to engage, manfully, in this process of fragile truth, than give oneself, dishonestly, to the pernicious parasite-machines of oversimplified systems (of which capitalism is one.)

OCTOBER 20, Hollywood Palace, Richmond:

The distasteful minimum between two points of activity or energy as regards their harmonious integration is in direct proportion to the amount of love emanating from within the points.

But what is love?

OCTOBER 22, Pellegrini's, City:

Can Australian cinema be saved? Is it just us here, them there? Leo Berkeley is a somewhat heartening case. Hot on the heels of *Return Home* and *Nirvana St. Murder* comes his own low-budget feature *Holidays on the River Yarra*. It is these films that bridge "us" to "them." These films practically suffer an identity problem (am I a commercial film? am I an independent film?), and that can only be healthy.

Leo has also recently completed a short film entitled *Summer Was A Blur*. The characters are accurately drawn from life and therefore exemplify 80's shallowness. That old dilemma: does one criticize something in showing it? (This is a fundamental philosophical problem.) Anyway, this is one of the better shorts made on 16mm. in recent times. Leo's own love of the cinema has been translated onto the screen, in the Rohmer and Godard touches, but also in the sense of adventure apparent within the film overall - the spatial shifts, the conventional but still peculiar use of music, and the magnificent attempt to render characters' feelings.

OCTOBER 25, Galleon, St.Kilda:

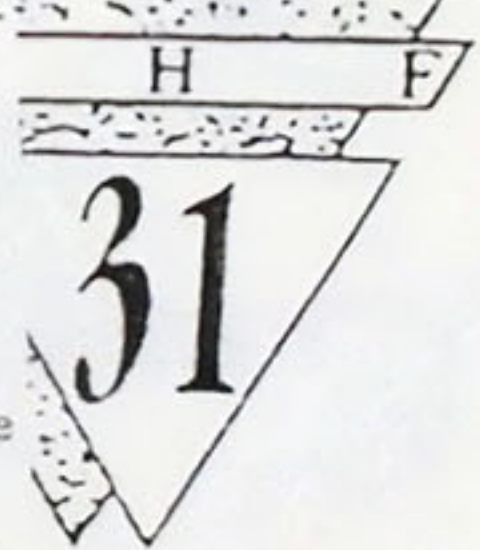
Godard once said that "art attracts us by what it reveals of our most secret self." If that is the case, Super-8 is the most attractive of film media. But Super-8 is not exempt from conventionalization (i.e. within the medium), and that is where a danger lies. Convention, by its nature, presupposes compatibility between differing forms and contents (the delineation of which is made presently for convenience). Thus there arises a delicate contradiction: 'schools' of original, innovative activity. Even without the effective tautology of the words "secret self", that is clearly illogical. (The attendant question of the possibility of uniqueness, and the expression of this uniqueness, is up to the individual to answer.)

OCTOBER 29, Franklin, City:

Local Super-8 film-maker Jenny Pignataro is the embodiment of a pure, sublime creative spirit at work. Three films in the space of six months attest to that. She is neither a careerist or an experimenter. She comes closest to being a hobbyist, though her films effortlessly transcend home movie or homage genres. She is expressing themes, to be sure, and her films conclusively demonstrate the particular efficacy of Super-8: its accessibility. Those who chide Jenny (and Sandy Munro for that matter) for technical ineptitude need examine their sense of priority, and leave their 'Male Orientation' (boys and their toys) far behind. (Point: why is not the maker of *Original Copy* so criticized?) Jenny loves what she does, and we should love her for that.

Until we next meet.

"The unexamined life is not worth living."  
(Socrates.)



PUBLIC TELEVISION AND SUPER-8

Are you TIRED of bringing your precious expressions to the Open Screening, then earnestly scanning the inert, glazed faces of those who bothered to turn up; wanting to, though unable to halt the plaintive query as it tumbles out of your mouth- "Well, what do you think?". WANT to broaden your audience optic?- or BLUDGEON the consciousness of untold thousands with your aesthetic/ avant garde/ leading edge/ less-is-more/ personal/ post modernist statements of filmic ART?! Then read on...

Public TV has been a slowly burgeoning force since the mid-'70's and the first Open Channel of the Whitlam era. Since then its public face has been subsumed in the mists of economic rationalisation, the Yuppie generation and government dithering.

Said an "Anonymous Cathode Pirate" from Feral TV in 1987, "The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal... was waiting to hear if Gareth Evans (then Minister of Communications) approved. They wanted a letter from (him) saying that Community TV wasn't against government policy; and that letter has sat in his tray for months...There was a complete stonewall" (1).

Feral TV, Australia's first urban pirate TV organisation, decided to quicken the debate by "squatting on a vacant frequency" (2), which created quite a media storm at the time.

The stone colossus heaved, paper cogs creaked, and in August '87 RMITV (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology TV) was granted a Test Broadcast License, closely followed by TVU (Television Unlimited). Public TV was now up and running.

Since the early '80's, 14 community TV groups around Australia have made over 20 test transmissions and produced more than 500 hours of locally made programmes.

Public TV means access with a capital 'A' (3). Most stations focus more on local issues, groups and concerns to form a more diverse outlet to the regional mosaic. Others balance this fundamental orientation with unsolicited documentaries, music clips, independent film and video.

Mike Collins, Programmer from SKA TV (St Kilda Access Television) said that the ideal and praxis of Public TV is

"gaining a degree of respect" and is now "dealt with more seriously" by government, business and statutory bodies, but SKA "still has a problem with underfunding which relates to a lack of publicity".

Nevertheless, momentum continues to build. Melbourne has four main metropolitan groups which have made several test transmissions over the last two years, as follows:

- TVU 3
- RMITV 3
- SKATV 2
- RAT (Richmond Access Television) 1

There is also a clutch of emergent regional organisations in Victoria including Eastern Regional Access (ERA), Preston TV (PRESTV) and Geelong Access Television (GAT).

Provisional Test Transmission Licenses were granted under the Australian Broadcast and Communications Act on an individual basis. This allowed Public TV organisations to develop the skills necessary for the establishment of a permanent public open channel, while also proving Public TV's viability to the legislators.

Earlier this year the Limited Licensing Amendment Act was passed which enabled the establishment of an on-going broadcasting license.

The Department of Transport and Communications (DOTAC) based their assent on the recent University of NSW Communications Law Centre Report entitled, "Public Television Report: An Evaluation". It recommended "that those groups which are ready to provide (continuing broadcast services) on an interim to test basis be allowed to do so" (4).

The (DOTAC) Minister, Ralph Willis, in his press release of 16/5/90 stated that the Report "emphasises the need for community involvement" and "also draws attention to...the limited resources available to public television groups" (5).

This is balanced by the fact that several corporate groups lend equipment to public TV; the vast majority of labour is voluntary, with scores of industry people imparting their technical expertise; the Amendment allows sponsors to be announced, hence opening the coffers to advertising, alongside the mainstays of donations and membership fees.

There are currently moves afoot, under the aegis of the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia, to use Channel 31 as a nationwide public channel. This frequency is currently unoccupied in all capital cities.

Public TV is now firmly on the agenda, and is perhaps one of the most exciting opportunities for 8mm film makers. As network corporate giants suffer the cutting edge of the bottom line: as legislators and business realise we have neither the money nor population to fund capital-expensive 'pay-TV': the prospect of a more diverse and participatory mass communication culture now becomes a question of 'When?', not 'How?'.

Below is a profile of three public TV organisations, independent film opportunities, selection procedures and contacts.

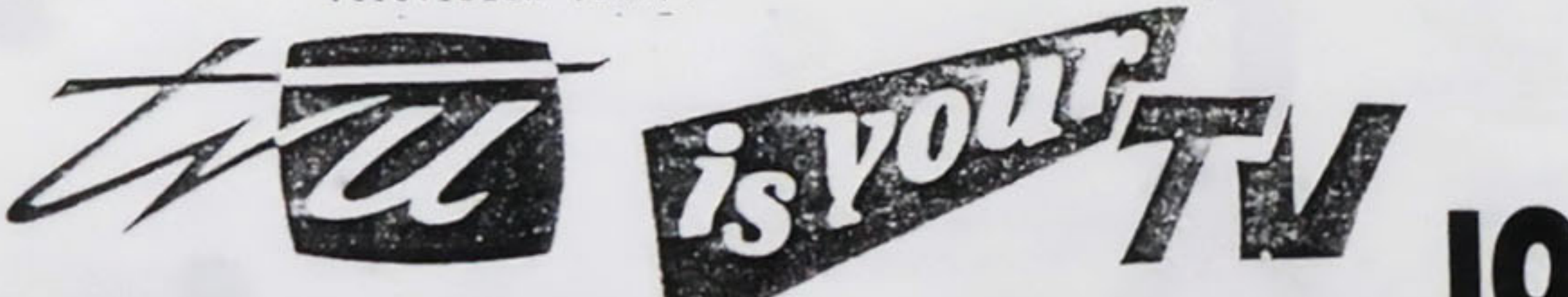
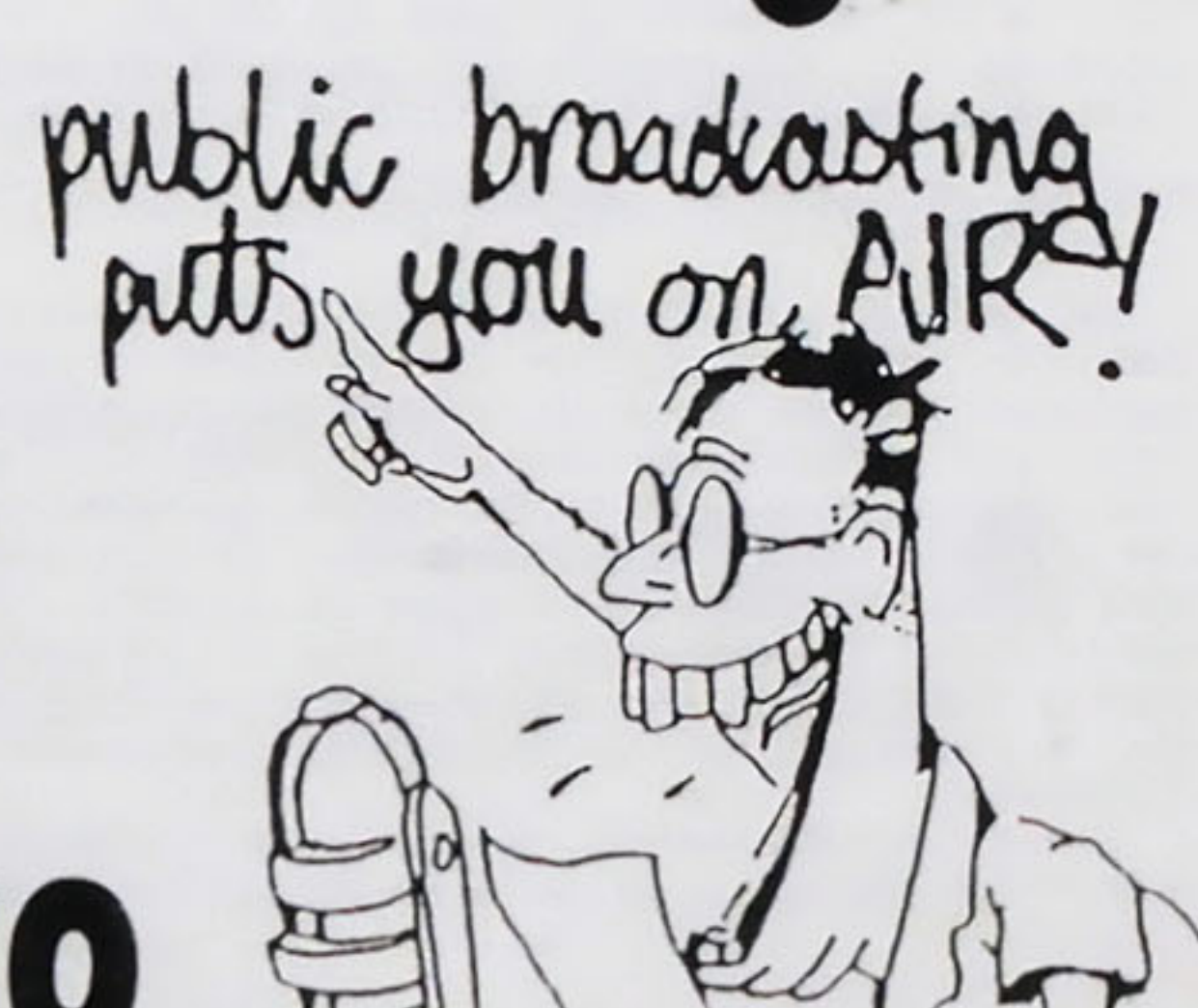
TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE...

Notes

- (1) Sarah Johnson interviews Anonymous Cathode Pirate, "Feral TV", MSC Yearbook, 1987.
- (2) *ibid.*
- (3) Tracy Norton, RAT.
- (4) SKA TV Newsletter, July, 1990, No. 2, Issue 3.
- (5) *ibid.*



NEWS FROM THE PUBLIC BROADCASTING ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



# Way of Seeing Feature

## "Whose Text?" #1.

The question of who a text belongs to bears on ownership, and on how "ownership" is defined.

Ownership of a text is of 2 kinds: (1) the holding of its copyright; (2) the making of a text what it is, defining it as the text it is.

Ownership of the 1st. kind loses any significance once the copyright to a text lapses and it comes into the public domain: this eventually happens to all texts. Ownership of the 2nd. kind applies to texts in general, whether under copyright or not: obviously this is the ownership intended in the question, since all texts will eventually make it relevant to them.

This is already hinted at in the either/or paradigm supplied with the question, to which any answer must direct itself and against which it will be determined and judged: "the author or the readers". This or that: it severely restricts the field of an answer's relevance, and therefore its form.

Who makes the text what it is, makes it the text it is? The author or the readers? The answer will determine a definition of "text".

But wait — isn't a definition of "text" in the question already assumed? How can a question with "text" in it be asked if we don't already suppose a meaning of this word?

In fact it is perfectly clear how "text" is meant in the question: it is the text before it is read — the work of art as something available to be read/viewed/listened to, etc. A work in its finished state is assumed: a completed structuring of some cultural format, whether literary, filmic, musical etc., which can be completely read. It is in an interpretable state: it is signed. And this does not by any means refer to a brand-new work just before it goes on sale, but to all works as existing graphematic structures: the interpretable minus the interpretations.

"Text", in other words, is in some limbo where it is not yet this text. Here it is assumed that the minimal element of readability — that which remains unalterable in the structure and which structures our freedom of interpretation — suffices to blanket the meaning of "text".

But the question at the same time assumes that this is not sufficient to define "text" — as the use of "belonging" or "ownership" to de-

note a form of definition makes clear. If the proprietorship of the author were in no doubt whatsoever, the question would not arise. In fact, the capacity of readers to give a text an identity and a defined character is neither negligible nor accidental.

For "text" literally signifies an interweaving of threads; originally, textile threads:

its derivation from "textile" is well known. The value "interweaving" was retained in the definition of "text" — from the middle-ages right up to the present day. "Text" is the interweaving of the reader and the read; the "text" is what occurs when a work is read. Reader and read are inseparably bound in the word — otherwise there is no "text". "Reader" in turn interweaves with exposition, commentary, elaboration, etc., which are in turn bound up with their culture and times, also "readable" and "interpretable" to future cultures and times — and so on. "Text" is woven into an entire network of socio-cultural and historical threads. Every modern definition of the word I have been able to find has given it this value.

The question of whether authors or readers own a text is not merely redundant: it is senseless, since both are components of what they would own. The author's work and its readers are parts of what a text is. A text seen only by the author and locked away in a dark cabinet, only to be burnt, years after the author's death when the cabinet is splintered for firewood — that is not only not a text: for all practical purposes it does not exist at all.

This is the dusty phantasm encapsulated in the question's "text". It may exist, undeniably — but solely from the "signatory"'s point of view. It will not survive that point of view unless it is very lucky.

Does it make sense to ask whom the texts of Shakespeare belong to? (Here some literary historians cannot even agree on the signatory!)

To the question "who owns a text — authors or readers?", we can reply: "Neither!"

Or, if this doesn't satisfy the paradigmatic criteria of the question: "Text and readers belong to each other — but only when they are together, like most marriages."

Text and marriage present the same structural picture to us. They belong to the same order of inseparability as a matched-neg.'s A and B rolls — which result in a married print.

WHO OWNS SUPER-8 ?  
or the struggle for the possession of an idea.

The Equation.

1. Agfa - Linda McCartney - Kodak - various stockholders own the raw emulsion coated celluloid which they sell to desperately addicted filmmakers at a tidy profit.



2a. The Super-8 maniac, after purchasing the film stock, then transfers her/his ideas, passions, personal manias to the film via:

- a) the careful manipulation of events that pass before the lens.
- b) the physical manipulation of raw image in the editing process.
- c) direct intervention (scarring/damage) on to the celluloid surface.

2b. The Super-8 film maker discusses her/his ideas, passions, personal manias with other artists, regardless of the perceived meanings of the work. This can be through personal contact or theoretical/critical writings.

And so the auteurs private ownership is transformed and transferred through several physical bodies into a public currency of ideas, multiplying with other disciplines offspring to form hybrids.

Through these actions the film artist has experienced the events surrounding the films production, as well as acquiring knowledge of internal processes that may not be obvious in the final result. He/she now possesses the most intimate meaning of the work produced.

The auteur will "own" this knowledge no matter how consummate their skill in communicating this possession to an audience. For a viewer to fully enter this personal meaning would require a D.N.A. shredding technology as yet unavailable to us, as this manner of interpretation resides in the physical body and physical bias of the artist.

3. The technical apparatus of film "owns" Super-8. Emulsion, cameras, lenses, projectors, screens, the light waves themselves, each of these "know" Super-8 in the most physical sense, and they possess that part of films total meaning.

4a. The viewer, upon screening of the labouriously sweated film piece, will now possess the public meaning of the work, through their optic nerve and personal bias. It will become the viewers private interpretation, his/her own intimate experience of Super-8 film. This ownership is multiplied by the number of individuals in the audience, each with their own subtle physical difference.

For the filmmaker to alter any of the audiences understanding of the film after this initial moment of possession, no matter how consummate the viewers skills in communication, would require a gene-splitting technology as yet unavailable to us, as this manner of interpretation resides in the physical body and the physical bias of the viewer.

4b. The viewer will discuss his/her personal interpretation of the work with other members of the public, regardless of the filmmakers intended meaning. This can be through personal contact, or critical/theoretical writings.

And so the viewers private ownership is transferred and transformed through several physical bodies into a public domain of ideas, multiplying with other communal offspring to form hybrids.

## The theory quote .....

From this point of view, Man is never, for Kant, the pure subject of Right. The naivety and the dogmatism of the humanists is that they want to base the rights of man on a determinate concept: namely, on an Idea of Man defined as some autonomous, rational (etc.) personality. As if this entity "Man" could lay the foundations for right's ultimate referent, and thus establish — once and for all — the norms of the just and the unjust, of the human and the inhuman. On the contrary, we think that the dynamic of modernity tends to undermine these reference systems and norms, by exposing them to a game of radical indeterminacy, to the risk of conflict, of disagreement [*le différend*\*]. This prohibits any determinate subject — individual, class, nation, or even empirical "humanity" — from claiming itself as the sovereign author or supreme referent of right.\* The "Man" without name or qualities to which is destined the rights of man, can only poorly designate this empty place of the Law, its unrepresentable excess, which invalidates in advance the arrogance of a great Lawgiver.

Jean-François Lyotard & Jacob Rogozinski



## The music quote .....

"Kamikazi lady in the city tonight!  
Would you like to get your tickets for the  
westside?  
She knows the way to open up holes in your  
head,  
and see the symptoms suffered by technology  
as dead."

- The Residents, "Kamikazi Lady".

So who owns Super-8? This equation is not a perfect representation of all the possible variations. Incomplete! This is only meant to map an idea's passage and transformation, its transition into the public domain (the Super-8 Newsletter).

To include all the cross-references (collective filmmaking, the filmmaker as viewer, the actors' role (sorry!)), would turn the equation into the quagmire of cultural activity that the critics' expression of 'correct' knowledge sinks into. There is no superiority in the critics' perception just as there is no added moral dimension to the artists knowledge. Every participants knowledge of Super-8 is valid, 'correct'. Each perceived meaning is a separate piece of information.

This equation doesn't show the wealth of detail that makes Super-8 film and its related discourse so enjoyable, complex, and excruciating.

The debate in the newsletter seems to center around the correct translation/perception of Super-8. The manner of its expression. The worthiness of the ideas expressed. Devices in the service of the filmmaker. Style, content, form, personal abuse. The relation to life itself. Love. Repitition.

All this language from the authors' perceived position of 'correct' knowledge when it is a biological diversity that makes every individuals perceived knowledge 'correct'. It is when the Super-8 Group (and its' moment/monument of expression, the Super-8 Festival) mirrors this chaos, and brings forth a cultural diversity, that it achieves its greatness.

Super-8 is a medium among many that serve as a base for the idea, but what makes Super-8 different is that it allows this diversity onto its' surface. The maker is not restrained (greatly) by capital or responsibility to the owners of capital. The medium does lend itself to filmic ideas but this is only a restraint in the hands of the unimaginative. Any idea is possible!

Makers of Super-8 have made films in other guages, just as Super-8 itself has been incorporated into larger guage films. This shows that Super-8 itself, as a medium, is transmutable, can be made superfluous to the filmmakers' idea or their will to express an idea.

And if Super-8, as a medium, can be made superfluous to the idea, who owns the idea?

Whoever is willing to place their body in the path of an idea, in an attempt to understand it, makes that idea their own.

T. Danko

# ON THE POSSESSION

## OF AN IDEA

Julian Dahl

"Is a Film Owned by the Film-goer or Film maker?"

Under the torpid, flickering hues of my midnight editor-viewer, as time grows short, my gaze afar; with curling ribbons of precious scenes like strange, ragged plumage of thought and seeing-nursing, splicing, feeding the child, already growing old from the original dream; the sleepless nights and vacant days, awaiting the birth of new squealing emulsion and its transport to others at the Open Screening!

The horrendous obstacles to creative fidelity and the technical foibles wed from ignorance and the nature of the gauge, can make S8 film makers rather jealous of their precocious child- the new film.

Like most endeavours on the creative fringe, it is all too tempting to claim a monopoly of the Holy See, the correct meaning or orientation behind your film. This was why I framed the question in MS8 51- "Is a film owned by the film-goer or film maker?"; a question in the exclusive and punitive terms of ownership and negation, asking for refutation. T Danko and M Zenner were keen to oblige

Ownership refers to three things:  
1) copyright, (2) access to the means of

S8 production, and (3) the question of ideas, their meaning and 'possession'.

T Danko underlines a fundamental aspect in his article when he notes that financial and material access to film, camera and equipment define one level of ownership, as exclusively as money defines possession. Clearly, S8 as a mode of expression is owned by those who have the money and contacts to utilise the means of production. Ownership works through denial and exclusion- the principles upon which money is based.

The key issue is beyond this, for S8's relative cheapness means if you have sufficient motivation (and self-denial!) you will be able to get hold of a camera and a few rolls of film. The main game here is that mystical cloud of meaning within and beyond the flickering light.

M Zenner redefines the essence of the question to be, "Who makes the text what it is, the author or the readers?" It is apparent that filmic ideas have no existence, no actuality, if the film is never seen. An emulsive whirlpool is just that if it is never projected onto the consciousness of the viewer. A creative form does not have an existence within itself. Alone it is merely pigment, canvas, stone, emulsion, tape (for want of truly objective signifiers).

This notion is at variance with the modernists who conjecture that a creative

work is like a sentinel standing tall amongst the irrelevant gaggling of critics, viewers and, yes, even the artist. "Art for art's sake" they cry-an admirable aesthetic which negates itself when the artist is seen as some peripheral puppeteer.

It was this issue which I sought to approach in MS8 51, "Way of Seeing Feature" which concluded with the comment "If Reality does exist it would be necessary to ignore it as irrelevant". In effect, if truth or an absolute idea does exist independantly from the viewer, then we as humans staring from our own self-constructed pin holes to the sky should ignore it, can only ignore it, for we are incapable of comprehending image or idea beyond our idiosyncratic personal experience. Experience is defined as that which is lived, thought, felt, read or dreamed.

This is not to deny the courage within the attempt to touch truth or commonality, but merely to assert the infinite multiplicity of its apprehension, and hence the denial of objective truth through the act of individual comprehension. Alas, our consciousness seems to be several millenium from even an approximation of half a grain of omnipotence. But I digress.

Basically, a film has no existence if it is not seen or talked about. The film maker owns his original themes or images to the extent to which her themes and images are personally constructed and originally expressed. Once the film-maker uses common devices, caricatures, cliches or other shorthand techniques, "ownership" or "possession" is lost. Cliches are just that for they have long defined the mainstream movie machine. Their general currency means they are immediately comprehensible to a vast number of viewers within a narrower spectrum of personal cognitive divergence.

The film maker owns his film to the extent to which her ideas and methods are new. Originality is the only state of creative possession, for no other person has ever used the device of thought in that particular way. Of course this notion is negated by my oft-repeated truism of the irreducible uniqueness of human meaning construction. Suffice it to say, originality here refers to newness, freshness and clarity beyond

merely personal difference towards the uncharted realms of cultural progression. It is only then that the film maker "posses the most intimate meaning of the work produced" (T Danko, op cit).

I would disagree with Zenner's , "A work in its finished state; a completed structuring of some cultural format, whether literary, filmic, musical, etc., which can be completely read". A film can never be completely understood for noone (aside from perhaps children and the insane) can glimpse the infinite multiplicity of possible interpretations. This returns to the idea that complete understanding dwells within the realms of soaring gods (if they exist), for only they allegedly posses the power to see all the refrations within the mosaic of meaning and hence only they can "own" an image or idea through its complete apprehension.

Humankind, at its present level of consciousness, can only approximate a "minimal element of readability" (M Zenner, op cit), and hence can only own a fragment of the meaning mosaic.

The deeper we can understand, feel and taste ideas and visions common to others, the closer we may come to holding truth- whose essence immediately crumbles from our grasp, for how can one posses what is common to all? The logical merri-go-round of pathetic approximation swirls on, unabated.

This is why I would diverge from T Danko's view that, "Whoever is willing to place their body in the path of an idea, in an attempt to understand it, makes that idea their own". This is somewhat of a truism, for one's self-constructed meaning is of course one's own. Possession or exclusive ownership is only possible if the viewer or film maker can grasp more shards of the meaning mosaic than the tiny optic of the personal allows. Perhaps this is what they call, 'wisdom'...?

Let us strive to remake the given, to grasp beyond that which is known, for there lies a greater chance to posses the new, if but for a moment. And if your film is soon seized by the cliché creators and hackneyed imagists, then you will know that you have touched that which is within us all- truth and beauty and kaleidoscope lights.

# CU

- M. ZENNER -

## THE FACE IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF FILM PERCEPTION.



Or, phonetically: See you, and matters of optic relating, or relatedness, in the orthographic abbreviary of cinema-scripts. The 30-foot smile, the clutching hand, and the montage-specifically-cinematic methods that arose directly from them...

I propose to put certain questions to the human face, taken here as the exemplar of close-ups in general. To wit: must getting close mean getting small? Does the ability to analyse a microscopic spot on a postage-stamp into subatomic particles consecrate an accurate view of things, and is an accurate view always a more realistic view? And finally, is the tiniest case necessarily a unique one? We will ask the human face, and listen for its answer: our exemplar is deep and must be sounded, as we sound an oracle. Matters intimately related to film will emerge.

If a unique and unrepeatable object exists in the world, it is a face — any particular one, living among us and using up oxygen, in transit between two eternities. If we imagine it comprised of jigsaw-pieces, we quickly see that no portion of it taken in isolation has the same uniquely identifiable quality; rather, they become factors of a common multiple, with nothing that mightn't equally belong to any number of possible faces: the reduction of each unit being directly proportional to the expansion of its applicability.

If finally we imagine a scale of units that brings each jigsaw-piece to a 1:1 equivalence with each skin-pore being reproduced, then both skin and reproduction will have disappeared, and we are in the realm of pure quanta, encodable by the same principles governing the codes of sub-atomic particles in Physics, neurone cells in Neurology, and information digits in Cybernetics — and decodable therefore

by any of these.

And vice-versa: the face at this micro-

scopic scale also encodes. Each of its units becomes a variable of several possible systems. The computerized police-identikit is one of them.

This would be a parable for language-systems generally: the narrower the hair a term can split, the more we multiply the situations (or semantic fields) in which it could be used: its increased specificity increases and diffuses, all-pervasively, the area of its pertinence — without our realizing it.

But for this perceptual lack on our part, there is a good reason: high-resolution terms are still kept in separate jargons, stored in jealous professional lexicons as we store preservatives in jars. Were such terms to come into general use, we would be obliged to deploy central data-terminals just to make our simplest everyday utterances understood, precisely and exactly!

Which brings us back to the human face, or the wood that couldn't be seen for the trees: constellated together, its features result as if by magic in something unrepeatable, the interlock of an occurrence that can never recur, and that will die with the living memory of it. Faces will enter and leave the lists of the living for as long as anything lives, and all of them shall be different: any two from any two points of eternal time, placed side by side, could be told apart.

That from such basically very similar units — skin and its pores, eyes and their lids, brows and their lines, noses, lips, chins, etc. — distinctnesses will infinitely be produced is the only miracle we indubitably are entitled to claim. A face, told between the dial-governor of time-in/time-out, is the rarest of all things and the least-recognized of rarities. Or rather, the most easily-forgotten, confronting us everywhere. And this is the unspoken source of the great value placed on an individual human life —

the value that founds values, the moral beliefs and ethical tables upon which laws, and finally the unwritten habitus of social practises, base and erect themselves. That is, upon the deep instinct that the rarest thing is the one to be prized, cherished and protected above other things. A rarity, like its value, in excess of gold, titanium among phenomena: a face, the ultimate sign of: a life.

Its correspondence to the cinema lies not, as you might think, in the content of the close-up, nor even in the fact that close-ups exist; but in an interlocking configuration of separable and extractable frames, shots, and scenes; and within these, of time-worn cultural symbols in familiar codes, each time and with each new configuration producing a unique work — something that no previous or subsequent configuration could result in. It takes only an



audience to trigger its existence; to bring it to life (and to lives). The exceptionally wide spectrum of technical choices to be made in each frame of each shot for each scene in every film counts as a definite plus for the uniqueness that results from this heterogeneous addition — whose end is qualitatively distinguishable, as Eisenstein said, from its mere sum.

A "qualitative" Unicity resulting from a Heterogeneity of units; each such unit already containing Heterogeneous cultural symbols: all of which hold yet a further Heterogeneity of history, usages, associations, etc.; units within units. But the "qualitative" character of the result now implies a new dimension to its Uniqueness: one that travels from spectator to spectator, and within each spectator at different screenings of the same film — whose mode of viewability at all re-viewings changes from cognition to re-cognition, from temporal uncertainty to reassuring familiarity; while previously-unnoticed elements are freely picked up. In other words, the "Unicity" of the resulting film implies still a further Heterogeneity. Can we then still speak of the "same" film? Or indeed of a "unique" result at all.



In fact, we both can and we can't. We are confronted by a paradoxical result in which a unique configuration is built on the most uniform divisions containing the most worn-out elements — and whose very possibility is internally structured by this uniformity and familiarity, both verifiable on any closer inspection. Indeed, only on closer inspection: the more minutely you examine part of a film, and the smaller the part, the less interesting it becomes, as is well known. A qualifiable difference in response to the same portion of film emerges, between the portion extracted for analysis and the portion seen within the entire work.

Of course it belongs to the nature of film, or any other formation of systematic divisions, that at any point a part of variable size may be extracted or inserted; and that such extraction or insertion will affect the surrounding context in its entirety, whether it is being depleted or repleted. The possibility on which a film's strength rests is also, and from the start, its vulnerability. To what? To having

its configured quality affected by changes in its contextual quantity.

But the smaller the part, the less it'll be missed; and the more general the possibility for reinserting it in other films, even other shots without greatly affecting them, becomes. And the greater the room for its justification becomes: ex-post-factum or during viewing. Even a close-up, a 6-frame flash of a face. How come? Because, and this is the point, the smallest part is never the most specific part; not in a film, not on a face, not anywhere. A flash C.U., a frame of red, inserted anywhere, is the vaguest of things, almost meaningless. ("Almost", because it still signifies "the meaningless", in the grand manner of Dada and Dali.) You might suppose that the minuter, the



Production stills from M La Rosa's 'Darling For a Day'.

more precisely located, the more definitely placed a piece was, the more specific and defined its meaning had to be — but it doesn't work that way. Placement is only in a configuration; specificity only arises within a plurality of elements: place and context are inseparable from the place, the specific meaning, and above all, from the specifically meaningless. (Make no mistake on this latter point: if something is meaningless it only takes on this character from surroundings in which it is meaningless.)

An extracted and reinserted piece of film relates to its new context like a skin-graft to its new owner: the larger the extracted piece, the more specific its incommensurate-ness-with-surroundings the new context will make it. The "meaningless" becomes sharply-contoured, readily identifiable; ultimately, quantifiable. (How this relates to excisable portions of a body or face should be obvious.) The bigger the bit, the less room for a critic to apply reasons-after-the-fact. The non-specifically meaningless a critic never sees: a spliceless, spoolless strip of film lying on some bench or floor. Ditto the ounce of graft-less flesh discarded in the linen bins of operating-theatres.

A frame, part of a shot, are not in themselves specific, any more than that onion-peel of discard-flesh. No matter how carefully placed in their original context they might have been, by themselves they mean nothing. It is on the contrary the larger portions of a film that are specific: their increase reduces their reinsertability if this is to be unnoticed, while simultaneously raising the effective value of any insertion, i.e., the specifics of its incommensurateness or "meaninglessness".

This leads us to the formulation of a paradoxical law that says: the narrower, more precisely-analysed and unitary a signifying unit becomes, the vaguer and

more ambiguous its actual significance is.

A paradoxical law: literally, a "law of parallel natures". Which doesn't mean they run alongside each other, but that two or more exist simultaneously.

Two or more: this already says the di-visibility of significant networks, divisible systems. Di-visibility: not two ways of looking at signifiers, but looks that go two ways at once: forward and back, subtracting and adding, from their point of departure.

Hence: "The minimizing of a unit maximizes its possibilities of deployment."

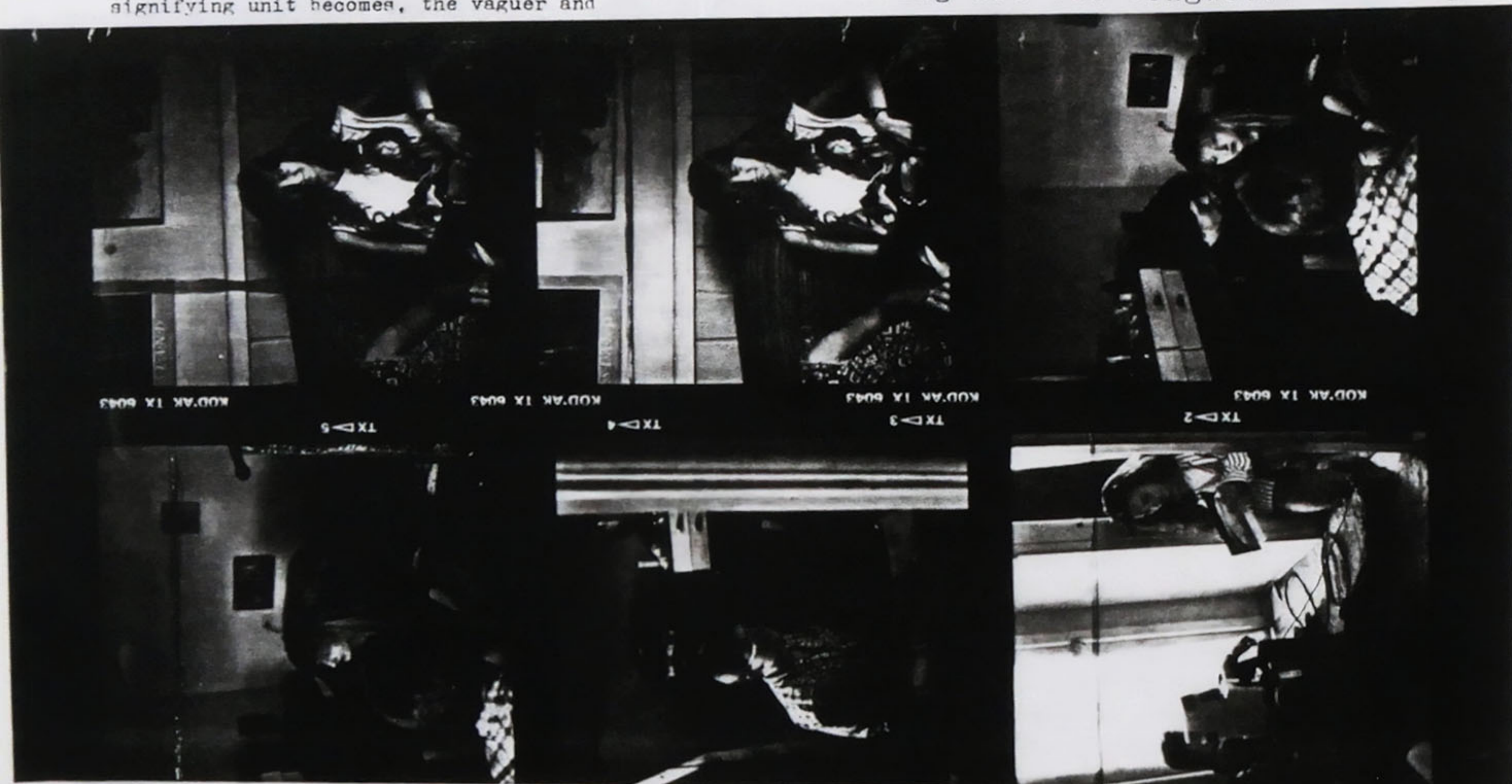
Or: "The contraction of a sign is in inverse ratio to the expansion of its applicable area."

We illustrate this by pointing out that below a certain threshold, film-perception becomes generalized. A flash remains a flash no matter the context or who is viewing: film's perceptual figure becomes lost, totally absorbed by its visual or narrative surroundings.

This has a bearing on Analysis, which consists in a breaking-down into more-or-less uniform component parts — or parts referent to a uniform scale. Perhaps then, the following examples are really aimed at critics and academic film-analysts: aesthetic time-and-motion experts with their Steenbecks, stopwatches and video-monitors. The (broad) similarity to the methods of Behaviorists is accidental, but the similarity of the results is not.

TUNE IN NEXT MONTH for the next nail-biting installment (Part Two), when MZ deconceptualises the 'concept' while objectively eating his own tongue...

8



# Problems Solved

... "the 18 frame sound delay".

This refers to the fact that the actual frame exposed is always 18 frames away from the sound head in the camera. Therefore the location of live sound on the sound stripe will always be 18 frames behind the projected image. This fact does not affect synchronisation.

"Super-8 film obviously being reversal has a lot of problems... you can't print around it at all".

Super-8 film is "reversal" film, ie the developed image is positive. One cannot, therefore, print a frame or blow-up directly, as this would yield a negative image. Frame blow-ups are achieved by means of a bellows and a reversed 50-70mm still format lens. The still is then printed from the 35mm negative. For the same reason one cannot use the lab to print dissolves, fades, etc - these all must be done 'in camera'.

Focus is "a little bit hit and miss".

The quality of (affordable!) S8 equipment is again a limiting factor, but here are a few techniques which improve results: a) shoot as wide as possible, b) use a tape measure, c) when shooting a moving subject with a static camera, pull the focus ring to maintain focus, d) good light and exposure enhance depth-of-field.

Depth-of-Field Defined: The area of sharp focus before and beyond the actual distance indicated on the focus ring.

... "when you do record sound on the projector, once you turn off you get this 'squelch' on the trak"

To avoid this you could re-record the entire score and feed it through the projector without stopping. Alternatively, you could locate the 'glitch' with the help of a sound editor-viewer and use a magnet to rub over the area. This will demagnetise the recorded 'glitch'.

"The sound level, when you go from close up to wider shots. In a scene you may have to move the microphone. How will this affect the sound recording onto your Super-8 sound film?"

Live sound in Super-8 is of notoriously dubious quality - a reality you must be tired of hearing by now. The general standard of equipment of the medium itself is perhaps the most limiting factor. After all, the 8mm sprocketed ribbon gained its popularity as an amateur gauge with equipment to match. Filmmakers disaffected from video's electric eye and the avant-garde rediscovering the rich tone of emulsion, have put unprecedented demands upon the narrow gauge, demands which, though difficult to meet, can also inspire ingenious solutions or new approximations. I digress.

Live sound in a scene moving from medium shot to wide angle is quite a mountain. One can try and hack a detour through use of a pin mike on the actor or a long boom, but you may lose the subject's voice if the camera itself is pulled back.

"Obviously when you intercut those two shots that's going to create some problems."

Live sound splices are usually pretty rough - a fact some may say lends a kind of naive charm to the medium. For those who find live splices more annoying than enamouring, here's the 'good oil'.

Sound 'glitches' often occur when the camera is first started or when sound levels are too divergent between scenes. These can be overcome by attempting to keep sound levels constant and/or locating the 'glitch' on the trak and cutting it out.

THE MELBOURNE SUPER 8 FILM GROUP

PRESENTS

## WORKSHOP

### "GETTING DOWN TO BASICS"

Have you always wanted to make films?  
Is technology your biggest stumbling block?  
Do you have many unanswered questions?

Well why not attend our first fully functional workshops!

As a part of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group's ongoing commitment to Super 8, we are proud to offer the first in a series of workshops designed to increase your skills in the Super 8 film making process.

"Getting Down to Basics" will familiarise you with the Super 8 camera, both in theory and practice, and allow you to see the results with the opportunity to edit your film. All the information covered will be backed up with a fact sheet.

DAY 1  
Saturday 17th November  
1.30 pm to 5.00 pm  
Location: to be announced

The workshop will commence with a rundown of the camera and its operation. Each participant will then shoot a three-minute roll of film, supplied by the group.

DAY 2  
Monday 25th November  
7.30 pm to 10.00 pm  
Location: Glasshouse meeting room

Each participant will project their film, then edit the film into a finished piece of work.

COST  
Members: only \$15.00 for both days, all inclusive.  
Non-members: \$30.00 which includes membership to the group.

We have limited places for this initial workshop, so if you are interested fill out the form overleaf

## WORKSHOP

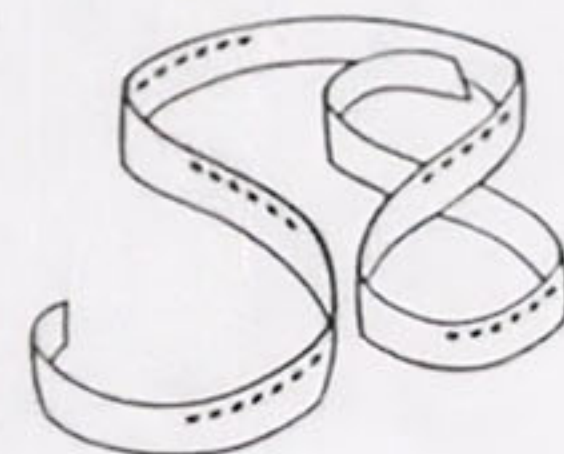
### GETTING DOWN TO BASICS

Application form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



Are you a member of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group Yes  No

We haven't got an endless supply of equipment, so if you could bring your own it would be great. Please tick a box to indicate the equipment you can supply.

DAY 1 Camera

Tripod

DAY 2 Editor Viewer

Splicer

Do not send money with this form. Bring along to Day 1.

Written confirmation of your application will be sent to you. If time is limited, we will confirm with you by phone.

Further information  
Matthew Rees 376 2016  
Bill Mousoulis 429 9847

Address  
SUPER 8 WORKSHOPS  
PO Box 1150  
Richmond North  
3121

# • open screening •

## LAST OPEN SCREENING

Lit Flat by Maeve Woods

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Rollercoaster brought in by Ian Poppins

Untitled by Les Hillis

rushes by Sandy Munro

The Restful Isles by Ian Poppins

His Mouse Friday cartoon,  
brought in by Ian Poppins

## NEXT OPEN SCREENING

When: Tuesday November 13, 7:30 p.m.

Where: Glasshouse Function Room,  
R.M.I.T., 360 Swanston St. City

OPEN SCREENING! OPEN SCREENING!

Don't hesitate, don't even think about it -  
just DO IT! Who are these screenings for?  
They are FOR YOU! So finish that film off  
and bring it along. Or something from the  
past if it hasn't been seen before.

Next  
Issue

SYDNEY SUPER 8 SCENE

MORE PROBLEMS SOLVED

CU PART TWO

WAY OF SEEING FEATURES

PUBLIC TV PROFILES

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!!

**Editorial & Layout By:** Julian Dahl

**Contact Number:** Bill Mousoulis 429 9847

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# Super Eight

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