

# super eight

THE NEWSLETTER-MAGAZINE OF THE MELBOURNE SUPER-8 FILM GROUP NO.7 SEPT 1986

## MEMBERSHIP CARDS.

As members will have noticed, membership cards have been enclosed with this month's newsletter. As we are now going to charge a \$1 "donation" for entry to the Open-Screenings, please present your card to exempt you from this.

The \$1 "donation" is needed to help with our running costs and compares most favorably with other similar groups.

## Meeting Reported

FILM REVIEW/REPORT Sarah Johnson

As the title suggests I am still unsure as whether to review last month's Open-Screening films or just to report on them. This article therefore is discussing the pros and cons to reviewing and making sometimes harsh judgements on films for the most part made by people just starting out.

For many people, no such question should arise. The reviewing of the films (and in this article I am strictly referring to our screenings only), is seen as a necessary and vital function that the group performs. Improvement by healthy criticism is certainly valid and providing the emphasis is on "healthy", I agree.

However, I think it's important not just for the reviewees but the reviewers to realise on what criteria their films are being judged. This varies immensely from reviewer to reviewer and the views of a reviewer are not and must not be taken as the general view of the Melbourne Super 8mm Film Group.

My criticism with film reviews in our context, is that we are trying (desperately) to encourage more experimental film-making. This often means that what one sees projected at our monthly meetings, may not be technically competent at all, but creative ideas have been utilised thought about, sometimes in great detail, and although the end result isn't there yet, an inkling, a promise is evident.

Saying this, I have no time for sycophantic responses either. One's honesty must outweigh one's hesitancy to hurt or to insult rubbish. The motivation behind some of the more obscure films we see, can be quite seriously questioned. Super 8mm attracts esoteric film-making in the extreme!!!!

My main idea with our reviews is that both the reviewer and the reviewee don't take them too seriously. Therefore if your film has been harshly treated remember that the reviewer is at the same level of film-making, most likely, as yourself (so who are they to judge?). And the reviewer should remember that there is almost always something positive about any film. At least they are making them.

CONT. OVERPAGE



Lucy and Peter

from John Calder's "Home Developing" experiment film.

## AN OPEN LETTER TO BARRY BRANCHFLOWER

Dear Barry,

I was shocked to read your dismissive, trite effort to criticise my filmwork. Your comment "Michael Hutak again showed that he can point a camera at a T.V. screen" leaves me almost lost for words. Almost. Barry is that really all you could see in front of you? A T.V. screen? Didn't those filmic representations of television pixels carry IMAGES? Didn't you look to see what these images may have been conveying? I'm not stupid Barry. I'm not trying to pretend that I am a great auteur passing off plagiarism as original and striking cinema. My attitudes can be read very clearly I think, but as you seem to have problems with the obvious let me state it.

I use images of T.V. to write with. I am not particularly interested in creating or originating the image. In fact I look at television as providing an overdetermined, pluralistic storehouse of imagery and my work is to make CHOICES - to decide what to use and what not to use, and in what surrounding context, and what vagaries of sound are involved, and how I might ironise one particular moment by juxtaposing it with another, etc., and so on. If you want to be a great director, great, go ahead. But don't prescribe the limits of filmmaking to be as narrow as your own desires.

Yours Sincerely,  
Michael Hutak,  
maker of  
Immortal Turf.

After saying all of that - here are my "reviews" on last months films:

1. Persephone - Jo Hampton. This eerie and dream-like film is beautiful and haunting. My only suggestion is that some one else does the singing, the music's terrific and very suitable. Can't wait to see the end result Jo!!!
2. Ge-Long - Barry Branchflower. This futuristic animation is fantastically done. Little doll-like figures totter in and out of their town. A good sence of pace and an amusing story - post apocalyptic Geelong- make a nice little film. Some of titles were hard if not impossible to read though.
3. "J C The Jewel Case" - Bill Mousoulis. A strange film in it's ideas, but competently put together and filmed. "The Jewel Case (J C) is a metaphor for Jesus Christ and the story is about a boy who finds Jesus (I think). The film is quite childlike in many ways and this can sometimes be infuriating.
4. "It Wont Be Long" - Simon Cooper. My only thoughts regarding this film were that hopefully "it wont be long" until it finishes. Film poetry this is definately not, pretentious mish mash, perhaps. It did have some interesting visuals in it, but the MacBeth voice over left me cold and the film-maker with "blood on his hands" so to speak.
5. "Busker" - David Cox. Prolific Super 8mm'er, Cox shows he has the ability to make any thing interesting. It doesn't always work but put music and this film-maker together and your bound to have an effective result. The audience's interest in the film's character proves the success of the film. A fraction too long I would suggest.
6. "Fistfull of Dolls" - Ron Olthof with some help. I call this the "Brussell Sprout Barbie" film. It's bizzare, gruesome and tantilizingly obscure. It perhaps relies on to much blood and guts, but is quite an interesting film nonetheless.

We want to encourage new people to review the films shown at the monthly open screenings. If you feel inspired to write about any of them your contribution is very welcome.



Man about St Kilda - Thorald Glitch  
John Calder's "Home Developing" experiment film.

J.C. DOES IT AGAIN by Barry Branchflower

John Calder presented another interesting talk at the August meeting ; the subject this time was home processing of your movie film .

Mathew Rees gave a testimonial on what it is like to attempt film processing for the first time.

The result of their combined effort was like watching a (very) old black and white film which flickered and faded away every so often. This would be an idea for a film within a film effect.

We also saw an example of developing in the negative. A black texta came out white on color negative backgrounds.

Some black and white film shot under street lights at night and processed to step up the ASA of the film looked breathtaking.

Most of the deep technical jargon went over my head, but John is there, I am sure, to draw on his vast experience should anyone be adventurous enough to wish to process their own film. You will be happy to know that the soundtrack is unaffected by any unkind treatment the emulsion layers receive in the developing tank.

## SPOLETO FRINGE FESTIVAL

Spoletto Fringe Festival - Garden Party - Super 8 Stall

Yes - we are going to run a stall at the Carlton Gardens to exhibit our craft and let the world know how brilliant we are. The stalls are a kind of Arts Expo where groups set up displays for the public and generally make themselves known.

Where: Carlton Gardens

When : Sunday 14th Sept: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

We need: display material, especially production stills, graphic art-work, and ingenious jigs and rigs, costumes and props from film projects. We also plan to show films, probably on a very small bright rear-projection screen.

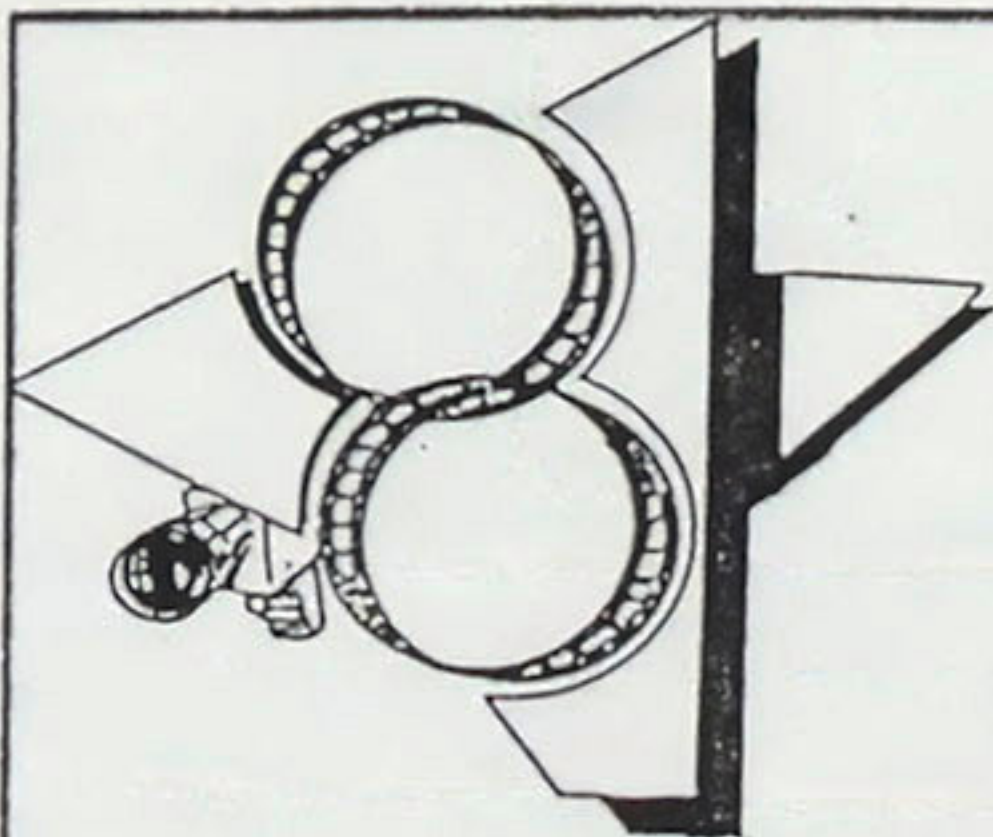
We also need volunteers to put some time in during the day (even 1 hour helps) running the stall, talking to interested people, and maybe even signing up new members if we're lucky.

If you can help either way, phone John 4281072 or Barry 8187442.

The film and video section of the Spoletto Fringe Festival will be held at the East End 3 cinema from the 26th Sept. to the 4th Oct. The program this year includes four mixed programs of experimental super 8, 16mm, and video, (which includes film performance), as well as feature films from overseas, and a program of 10 works from the "Hey, Hey It's Saturday" competition. Of special interest to super 8 group members will be the program of super 8 from New York, Japan, and Moscow which will be on Friday Oct. 3rd at 7:15 p.m. This will be our first opportunity to see super 8 from Moscow, so it will be worth going along to have a look.

FRINGE NETWORK LTD, 201 BRUNSWICK ST. FITZROY 419 9549

X Japanese S-8, Grierson, Sep 15 7p.m.



# SUPER 8 FESTIVAL REVIEWED

An unprecedented public response to local super 8 work was shown at 'The 1st Melbourne Super 8 Festival' held at the Glasshouse on the 28th, 29th, and 30th of August. About 400 people turned up over the three nights, with a truly 'festive' 200 at the Saturday night program.

As usual with super 8 screenings, the festival exhibited a wildly mixed bag of films. In trying to review this 35 film event I've had to be selective in my mention of films. My choices are fairly random really, based mostly on personal preference.

My favourite film of the festival is Nick Ostrovskis' 'single frame' film Westgate Bridge. It is a kaleidoscope of often superimposed filmed photographic slides, prints, and negatives. Like all the work I have seen by this filmmaker, the film is silent. To watch it is to be induced into something of a trance-like state; a purely visual experience.

Peter Napier's Maladaptation No. 3 is a very actor-oriented film; a bare room, a typewriter, and a telephone are almost the only other things to attract attention. The machines, presented here stripped of their usefulness, are absurd, mysterious objects. The 'primitive' man, with qualities of innocence and helplessness compared to the 'beings' he has allowed to invade his existence, is the other 'maladaptation'. There is an interesting tension in this film between funny and tragic which is enhanced very much by Ian Ecclesmith's acting. He has a wonderful clownlike quality reminiscent of Harpo Marx or Buster Keaton. The music, dramatic and discordant, is also by Ian Ecclesmith.

Outside In, David Kaneen's black and white 'super 8 to video', is a portrait of an isolated man who works in a psychiatric hospital. It takes the form of narrative drama, (a risky proposition with super 8 I think), which it handles very sensitively. I found particularly effective the scene in which the man sits in front of the television and is lulled into a semi-conscious state where his dream and external reality merge. The use of dissolves and careful juxtaposition of the shots enhance this effect. The acting is convincing, and the music, again by Ian Ecclesmith, adds considerably to the dramatic impact.

Five or six films from interstate appeared in the festival. Immortal Turf from Sydney gave a sardonic and decadent aspect to the opening night program. Kinematic, by Perth filmmaker Stewart Carter, was a beautiful film to look at with a fascinating contrast between the flowing movements of a dancer and the mechanical movements of the camera. Mark Titmarsh's film Legion did not arrive in time to be screened which was a disappointment as it is a marvellous film.

However, Simon Cooper's It Won't Be Long was added to the festival program to compensate. T.V., comics, and Macbeth were just a few elements in this Sydney film. It was a collage of abruptly cut sound and image, painting a chaotic world of isolated children inhabiting concrete playgrounds, and confused and disillusioned heroes who have all lost heart. The discordant presence of the absurdly contrived

'Shakespearian' voice cut in and out of the soundtrack provided a bizarre element of contrast and drama to this film which answered "no" to its own question "will we ever find peace from violence?".

T.V. images, as expressions of a destructive, money-obsessed world, were used again in The Son and the Heir by Piero Colli and Mark La Rosa. This film is another visually beautiful film with a dynamic soundtrack, (qualities it also has in common with Mehmet Raif's The Midnight Train To Katmandu). A couple of particularly strong images from The Son and the Heir stick in my mind. The first is a shot in which the camera moves through a lush green forest. This is punctuated by flashes of a youth, a man, and an old man, dissolving together to suggest the process of ageing. In the poignant final shot of the film, an image of that forest is projected onto a venetian blind. The slats are opened, the light from outside streams in, and the fragile and ethereal vision disappears.

I noticed some common concerns appearing in some of the films. Quite a few films, for instance, (most noticeably Citizen Shit and The Little Tailor Was Disturbed), took to the liberal use of fake blood in a celebration of the cheap effect. Animation was also visible in a number of films. Plasmo had a plasticene creature dancing in time with Peter Garrett, whilst in Aesop's Fable a one man crowd cheered wildly as a pot and an iron raced each other down the garden path. In a different vein, Continental Yours, a lovingly made homage to Godard, had Rolando Caputo talking about the death of a certain type of 'poetic' cinema. He took this idea further with his own film Waiting which concluded with the words "she knew that everything was now possible-except sincerity".

The longest film at the festival was Urban Blues and Pointy Shoes, a lively attempt at a history of Victoria which made connections between larrikins, boddies and widdies, and punks. It used a variety of forms including shadow puppets, animation, narrative, and documentary, with references to Ned Kelly, Homicide, and The Sentimental Bloke. It was mammoth in scope and, from the look of the credits, (which included a grateful thanks to the Department of Social Security), in production as well. The diversity of approach made the film really interesting to watch and gave richness to the depictions of the lives of those in the social groups it dealt with.

To organize and finance the festival single handedly was a brave act by Bill Mousoulis. His staging of this first big Melbourne super 8 event coincides perfectly with the growing enthusiasm and energy surrounding local super 8 production. The suddenly apparent liveliness, related very much to the formation of the super 8 group earlier this year, is reflected in the fact that two thirds of the many Melbourne films in the program were made in 1986. The audiences at the festival showed that there is also an expanding public interest in super 8, which suggests the super 8 group should be eligible for funding from the film bodies to stage next year's festival.

Anne-Marie Crawford

## -RESOURCE POOL-

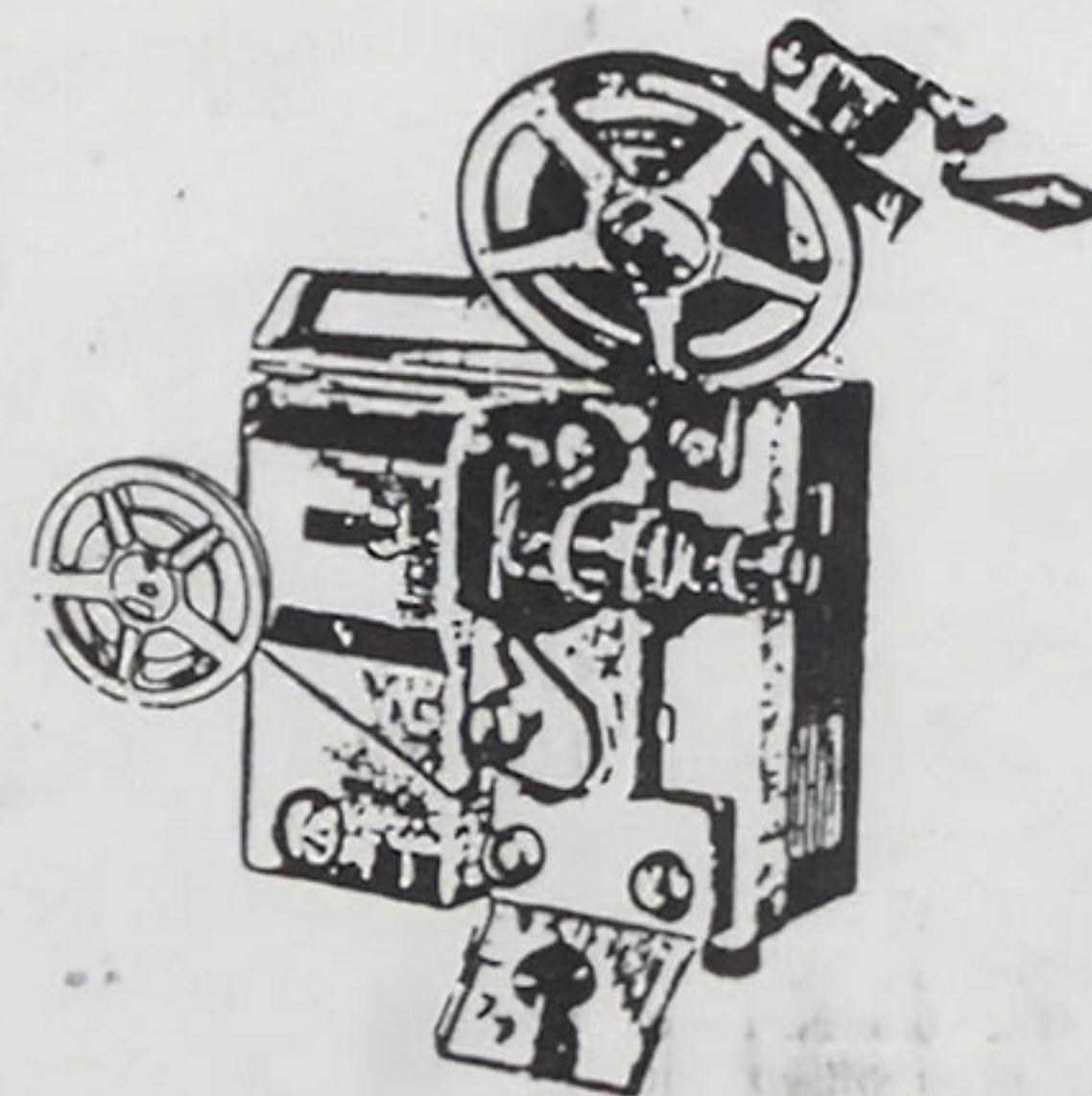
The calls have begun coming in for the actor/film crew/ equipment resource pool which was announced in last month's newsletter. The list is still a long way from being exhaustive though.

If you are willing to contribute to the work of other filmmakers in any way, please ring and say what you have to offer and on what conditions you offer it.

You can also ring if you want help on your film.

CREW AND EQUIPMENT - Bill Mousoulis: 419 6562

ACTORS - Matthew Rees : 387 9292



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The "Victorian Movie Makers" have invited the Melbourne Super-8 Film Group to their meeting of Weds Oct 8th.

They have been admiring our newsletter and they want to meet us and see our films.

Vic Movie Makers is an amateur movie-making club, and is 50 years old this year. They have built up an impressive theatre and space in Fitzroy and run an International Film Festival with separate Amateur and Independent competitions (with prizes!) that packed the State Film Centre last year. (Entry forms for 1986 available at our next meeting on 16th Sept).

When : Weds Oct 6th, 7:30 p.m.

Where : Vic Movie Makers, 2 Napier St, Fitzroy.

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MEMBERS WELCOME MEMBERS WELCOME MEMBERS WELCOME

As always, members are needed to help support the group in other ways than financial.

Contributions to the newsletter are more than welcome, as are any general ideas on the running of the group, the Work-Shops etc. For your information a list of the Committee is as follows, do not hesitate to contact any of us if you do have any ideas, suggestions, queries.

- Sarah Johnson - President
- Barry Branchflower - Vice President
- Bill Mousoulis - Secretary
- Matthew Rees - Treasurer
- PLUS THE MORE THAN NECESSARY,  
John Calder, Anne-Marie Crawford,  
Brett Cameron and Peter Nathan.

## super eight

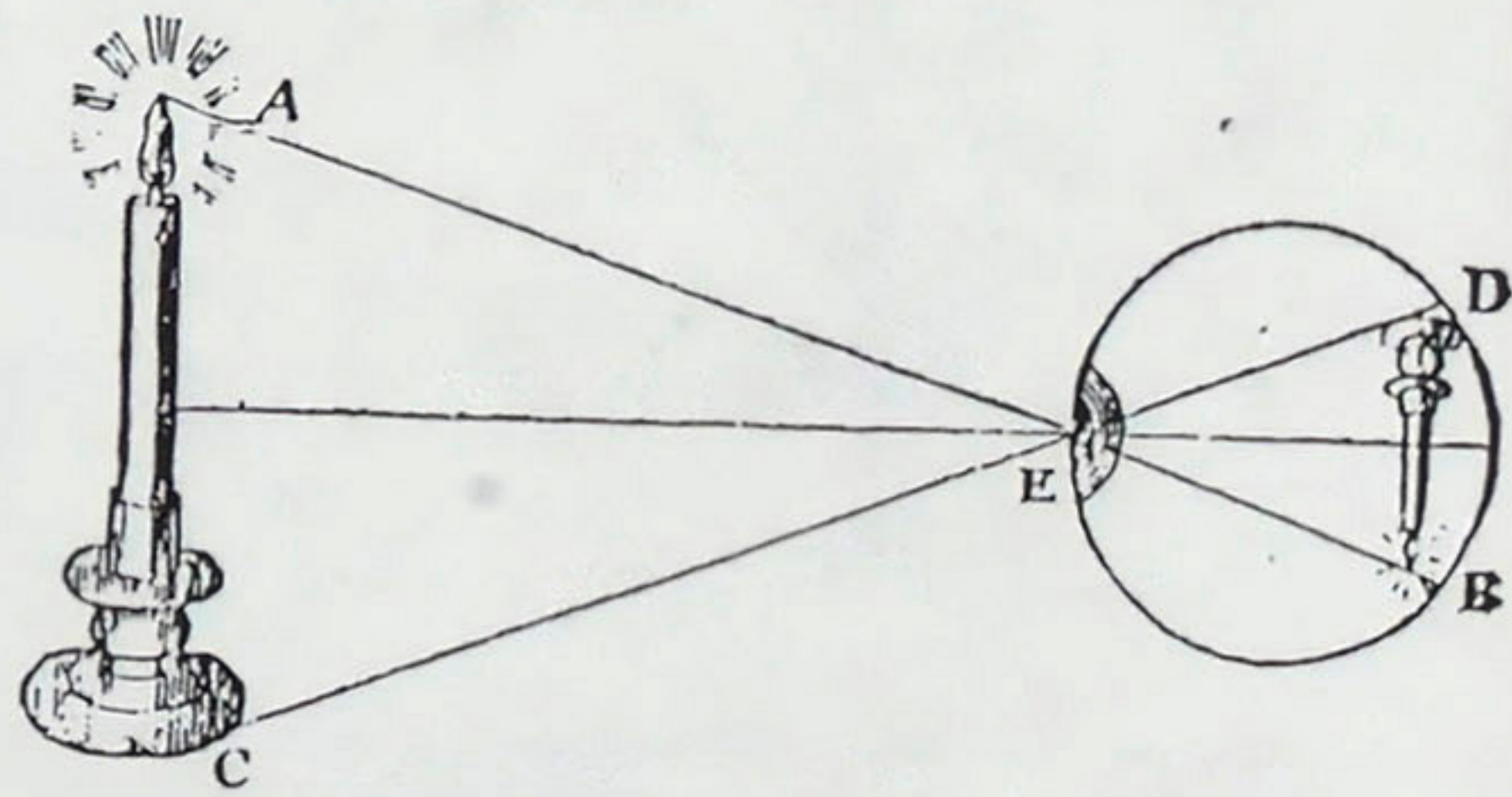
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Contributions are welcome

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



NEXT OPEN SCREENING:  
This will be on SEPTEMBER 16th,  
Meeting Room  
Next to Glasshouse Cinema  
R.M.I.T.

### WORKSHOP

MUSIC\*\*\*MUSIC\*\*\*MUSIC\*\*\*

With David Cox

WORK SHOP - 16th September from 7:30 until 8:30

David is well known for his fantastic music a lot of which has been used to great effect on various Super 8mm films. There will be a brief discussion and he will demonstrate his talents.

Music is often a vital part of a film and to listen to a musician tell of the trials and tribulations of composing especially for Super 8mm will be of great interest.

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