

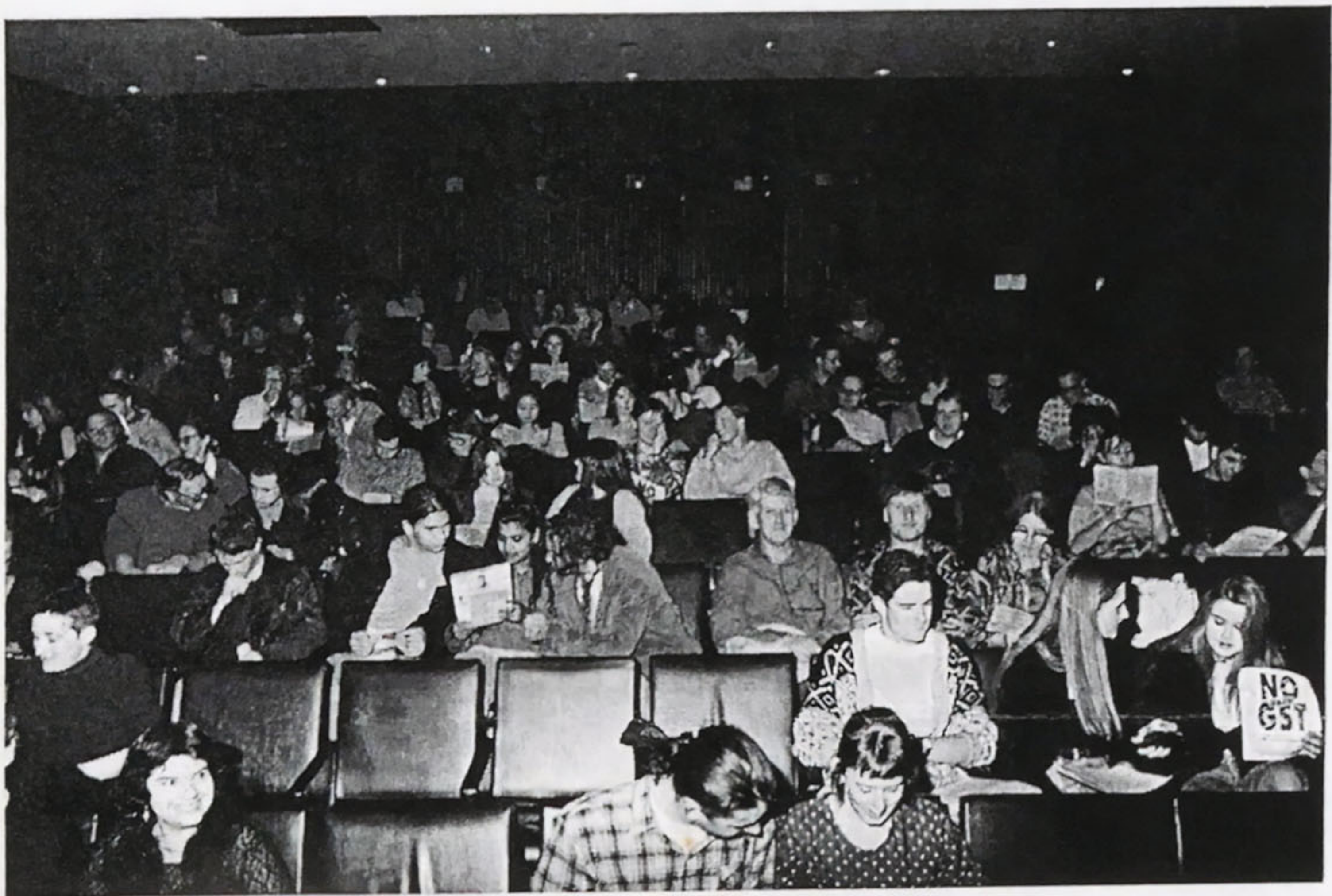
Super Eight

Newsletter of the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group

7th MELBOURNE •SUPER 8•

FILM FESTIVAL

My bike and I went to a couple sessions of the super-8 festival. The films were enjoyed and discussed at length cycling home - avoiding potholes.



The State Film Theatre begins to fill up at the opening of the festival

Whilst my bike can't (of course) go inside a cinema, it still enjoys the sense of occasion of going - the happy festival vibes and getting locked to the black steel railing under the stairs outside where it meets others of its kind.

My bike told me that I could increase my self-esteem by going on the super-8 committee.

N.O.

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue is dedicated to the 7th Melbourne Super 8 Film Festival: articles, reviews and pictures. Read on for more....

Unfortunately Michael Agars article about Sales Tax and how the changes in the law affect the Super 8 Filmmaker was not quite ready for this issue, but will be in next months. In the meantime I will try and get some details. If you have any queries contact the office.

LAST OPEN SCREENING

Silent Light (3 mins)	Tony Woods
The Night City (19 mins)	Perry Alexander
Luna Park (3 mins)	Jim Bridges
Bonny & Clyde Reshot (3 mins)	Jim Bridges

In spite of the festival being on the previous weekend 20 people turned up for the Open Screening. After the above we looked at some of the films (not local) that didn't make it into the festival. I won't disclose which ones to save embarrassment on the part of the filmmakers.

NEXT OPEN SCREENING

7.30pm
Tuesday 13th April
211 Johnston Street, Fitzroy

At 7.30:
SHADES OF THE DARK
Films by Marie Craven
(see opposite page for details)

Followed by an Open Screening.
BYO Super 8 films: 1st come, 1st shown.

EUROPEAN MEDIA ART FESTIVAL OSNABRUCK

The European Media Art Festival will take place in Osnabruck from September 15 - 19 1993. It is one of the most prestigious short film festivals in the world and accepts Super 8. Entry deadline is the end of April. If you are interested in entering your film contact the office immediately.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Norma Pearse and Pete Spence on the birth of their son Perrin on Sunday 21st March. The youngest member of the group to date. We hope to see Perrins first film at an open screening soon!

NEW/OLD COMMITTEE MEMBER

We welcome Nick Ostrovskis back as a member of the committee. The committee has a full complement of members for the first time in a while. As always non-committee members are welcome to come along to committee meetings. They usually take place on the Tuesday after the open screening in the office at 6.30pm.

Membership Super 8 Group

Cost only \$15, \$10 Concession annually, which includes a copy of **Super Eight** each month, opens doors to open screenings, a wide selection of equipment hire, the invaluable experience of our long standing members as well as contact with other film makers.

FILMPLUS

- * 16mm PROCESSING
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BLACK AND WHITE NEGATIVE - PRINT
- * SUPER 8 PROCESSING
BLACK AND WHITE, EKTACHROME & AGFA
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(Hi-band/lo-band U-Matic and VHS/SVHS video)
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FAST TURNAROUND *** COST EFFECTIVE

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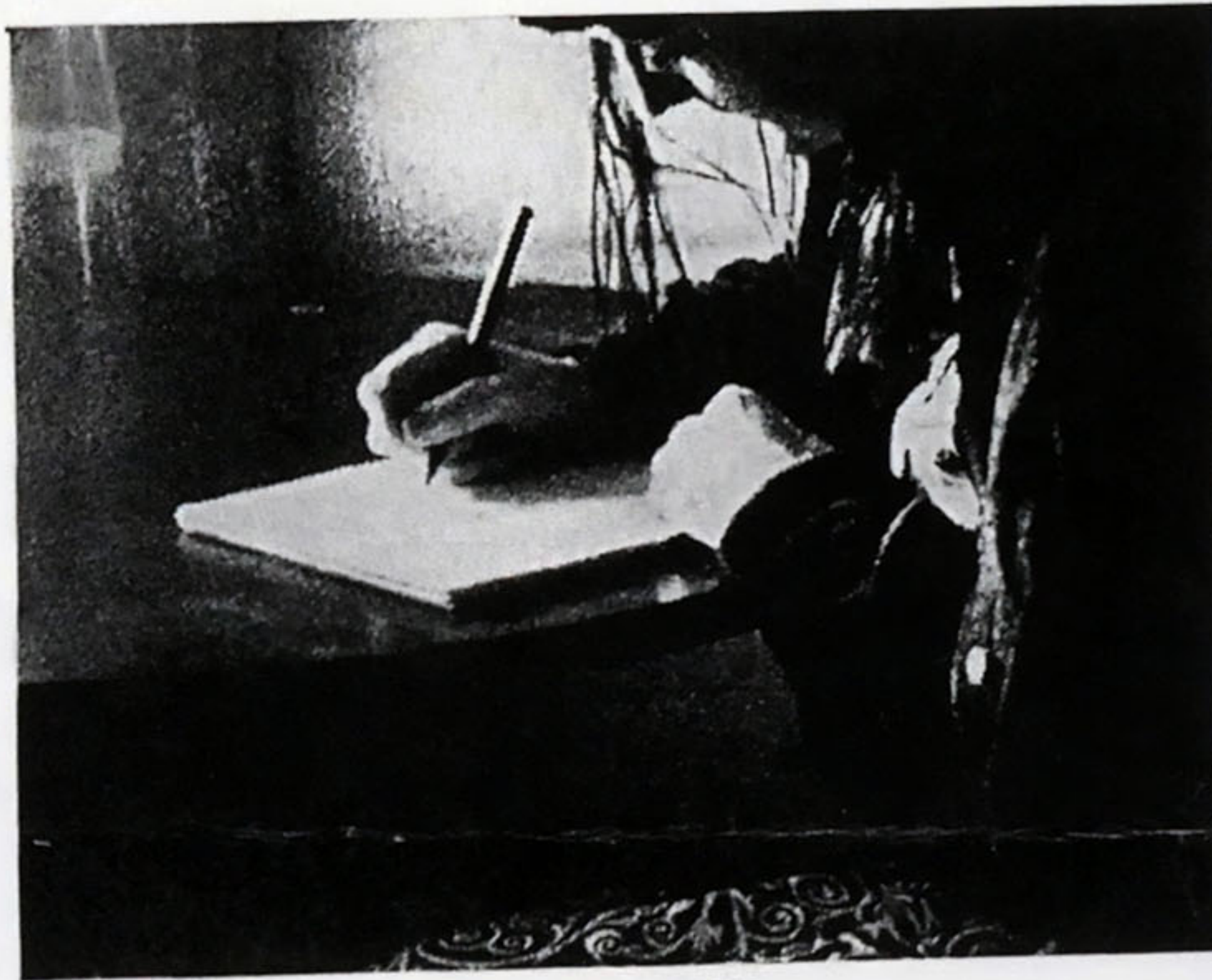
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FILMPLUS

SHADES OF THE DARK

Films by Marie Craven

(formerly Anne-Marie Crawford)



PALE BLACK

UNDERGROUND

(Super 8, 4 mins, silent, 1986)

A poem of a particular time. It was shot on stock left over from a narrative project that dissolved away as it was being made. Remnants of that big, impossible dream are interwoven with reflections on a more tangible but restricted personal reality. The film reflects, too, on its own making.

MORENA

(Super 8, 4 mins, 1987)

Morena collects fragments of a personal history: old stills, bits of dreams, identifications, moments of clarity, and things half seen. She is searching through these scattered moments to find something essential that may exist beneath the surface of things. A singular emotion, a tone, a fragile thread to connect diverse experience.

WHITE WOMAN

(Super 8, 4 mins, 1988)

She hides in little cracks. She is able to get herself in behind the edges of doors. She can squeeze herself into these maze-like crevices and go in and in. Further and further inside so that no-one can find her.

PLATEAU

(Super 8/Betacam SP video, 30 secs, 1989)

Plateau was part of the "Personal Ads" project, produced by myself and Chris Windmill. Eight film/video artists (including ourselves) were commissioned to produce 30 second works which were then put to air during late night ad breaks on Channel 9 in Perth. Like the project itself, *Plateau* was intended to be very ephemeral. It was a quiet and remote thing, that appeared and disappeared for a time, like a fading beacon, amid the raucousness of TV night.

PALE BLACK

(Super 8/16mm, 13 mins, 1992)

Diary of a phantom self. The initial impulse to document myself in this film has given rise to a fiction. Within this truth/fiction paradox lies a euphoric possibility, a kind of film evoked so vividly by Andre Bazin: "an hallucination that is also a fact".

it concerns me when the daughter of one of the Group's filmmakers is refused entry to see their father's film, it seems up until 14 years of age Dominant Culture (heretic of the spirit) wants make certainty through law that it is Dominance, children should be able during formative years to access alternative culture, another pity was that the work of Jurgen Reble and the SUPER 8 Group SCHMELZ DAHIN arrived a few days before the Festival, both preview tapes were shown in the foyer during opening night, the 3 members of the group have over the past 15 years produced about 37 films mostly SUPER 8, another Group using mainly SUPER 8 is VIEW (Japan) the films i have seen to date would be a draw-card at any festival, the things you can do with FUJI Single 8 were apparent i.e. long multiple exposures mattes backwinding long continuous slow motion etc all things that can't happen with the usual S.8 cassette,

„CLOUD IN TROUSERS
the first lines of the prologue to 'A Cloud in Trousers':

I will tease your thought
Which dozes in your softened brain
Like a fat butler on a greasy sofa. . . .
. . . I will insult you to satiety. . .
Men, as crumpled as a hospital bed,
And women, as trite as a proverb.

and BIG TABLE are

two literary titles from the Festival one from a title of a poem by Mayakovskii and the other from an 60's American poetry journal, DAYS IN ABUD is a great jaunt i hope to go on again soon, i enjoyed seeing Dirk's MUG in Dave Cox's SPIRAL U.S.A., Jennifer Pignataro peels a onion best, BRAIN SURGE had Jim and mysElf going on our favorite image overload fuse, this Festival was the best i've been to so far, the Selection Committee were excellant and politically witty throughout, whyche reminds me, last open screening i promised to show an EX.PE.RI.ME.NT.AL. film but didn't 2 reasons 1 the film when i looked at it turned out to be vintage pete spence from my vantage so i figured it weren't all that spearimeantall 2 i decided to stay home with Norma that nite 'cause things were getting close elsewhere, anyway i'm still reworking this particular film hoping to make something new of it to show at an open screening when i feel it's fitting the bill, in the meantime Norma had a Boy on Sunday the 21st after a fairly hectik satdey nite

his name is PERREN and he's into Calculus 'cause he's always working out ways to get a feed, we R wery ha,ppy,,,yrs pete spence



NORMA

MAIL ART



Theme: FISH Media: Open

Deadline:
OCTOBER 31, 1993

Maximum Size
11" x 17"
28 x 43 cm

No Jury No Rejection No Return
Underwater Documentation To All

Send To:

OBVIOUS FISH

Box 1644
Milan, IL 61264
U.S.A.



el Pescado * le Poisson * il Pesce
* der Fisch

by Bill Mousoulis

Is festival. Is good.

Bert got it wrong, calling it "annual", and I wish he were right - but that is only a minor quibble.

There was something reassuring about this festival, the 7th one hitherto. About the lack of hype, the lack of balloons, the lack of interval entertainment (cf. '90, '91 festivals). What we got was films. And, indeed, indications that this Melbourne well is far from dry.

The low point for me was the disrespect shown (in the last two sessions) to some of the (experimental) films by several hecklers. They were subtle, but that is nothing in their favour. Dickheads. Stay at home and watch Channel 7.

I will be showing something resembling disrespect myself in the following comments on some of the films. But it's not really disrespect - the comments are simply spontaneous, not deeply thought out, and maybe focusing on minor aspects. Space and time do not permit otherwise, and some comment is better than none.

I saw 4 of the 5 sessions, and enjoyed the films overall, but there was no single, explosive, revelatory experience for me the way there was at the 6th festival with Susannah Dickinson's *The Great Leap Forward*.

Firstly, it was instructive seeing some films for the second (or third) time, and seeing how they change. Some yield more, showing their layers, whilst others fall to the ground, exhausted. Ian Poppins and Phil Jakubik's *Experimental Film* is a case in point. It attained immediate "classic" status at its debut a month ago, being a totally inspired, unexpected, and opportune attack (albeit playfully) on experimental film, but it yielded nothing new on a second viewing. The joke had worn thin. Compare Chris Windmill's *O Elusive Sparrow*. Again, a comedy, but with another layer to it, revealed magnificently on a subsequent viewing. The shots of birds are not "dead" shots (i.e. where the audience laughs at the preceding jokes). One shouldn't forget the mystical, almost religious, quality to Chris' work. (The whole group of people running off at the end seems to say one thing to me: Heaven.)

Laki Sideris' *Jogger* also reveals hidden layers (on a first viewing of a film, it is enough to simply keep up with the narration). There's a deep mystery to this film, which seems to me to be the very mystery of life - it is a strange and powerfully emotional moment when the young man leaves the frame, as if he has just died. Okay, maybe I'm being overdramatic in these interpretations here, but it can't be denied that good films are ultimately unfathomable, hitting very rich veins. Second viewings of other films showed them to also be very fine artistic creations: *City Walk*, *Journey*, *Arnold West*, *Infinity*, *One Thought*.

Most of the festival's films I saw for the first time.

The overseas material, for the main part, reflected that we very much live in an age of "ideological critique". There were more "correct line"s than you could poke a stick at, especially with the American stuff. *Smartarses*. "Apologies to Madonna" indeed. Sure Madonna is shit ideologically - that doesn't make her songs (and clips) "Erotica" and "Deeper and Deeper" (not to mention her earlier work) any less fascinating or richly emotive. Soma Sema was different - a Kenneth Anger romp. Madonna ("Erotica" clip) without the spirituality. No thank you. Also different were *Going to Work* and *Atomikka*, being more in line with the prevalent local aesthetic, which I'll now make some comments on.

"Experimental" is hardly the appropriate label here, merely the most convenient. "Diary" or "Documentary" would even fit better perhaps. Whatever the label, there is a large, strong body of films here: *Throw Window Sites* (pete spence), *Days in Ubud* (Arthur and Corinne Cantrill), *Islamic* (Norma Pearse), *Spiral U.S.A.* (David Cox), *Storm Bugs* (Steven Ball), *Museum* (Peter Schuller), *Midsummer* (Ooni Peh), *Triad Tesseraic* (Maeve Woods), and some of the aforementioned titles. This is in stark contrast to the number of "conventional narrative" films in the overall program, there being only 4 or 5 examples. These comments that now follow on these "experimental" films are (and should be treated as) highly subjective comments.

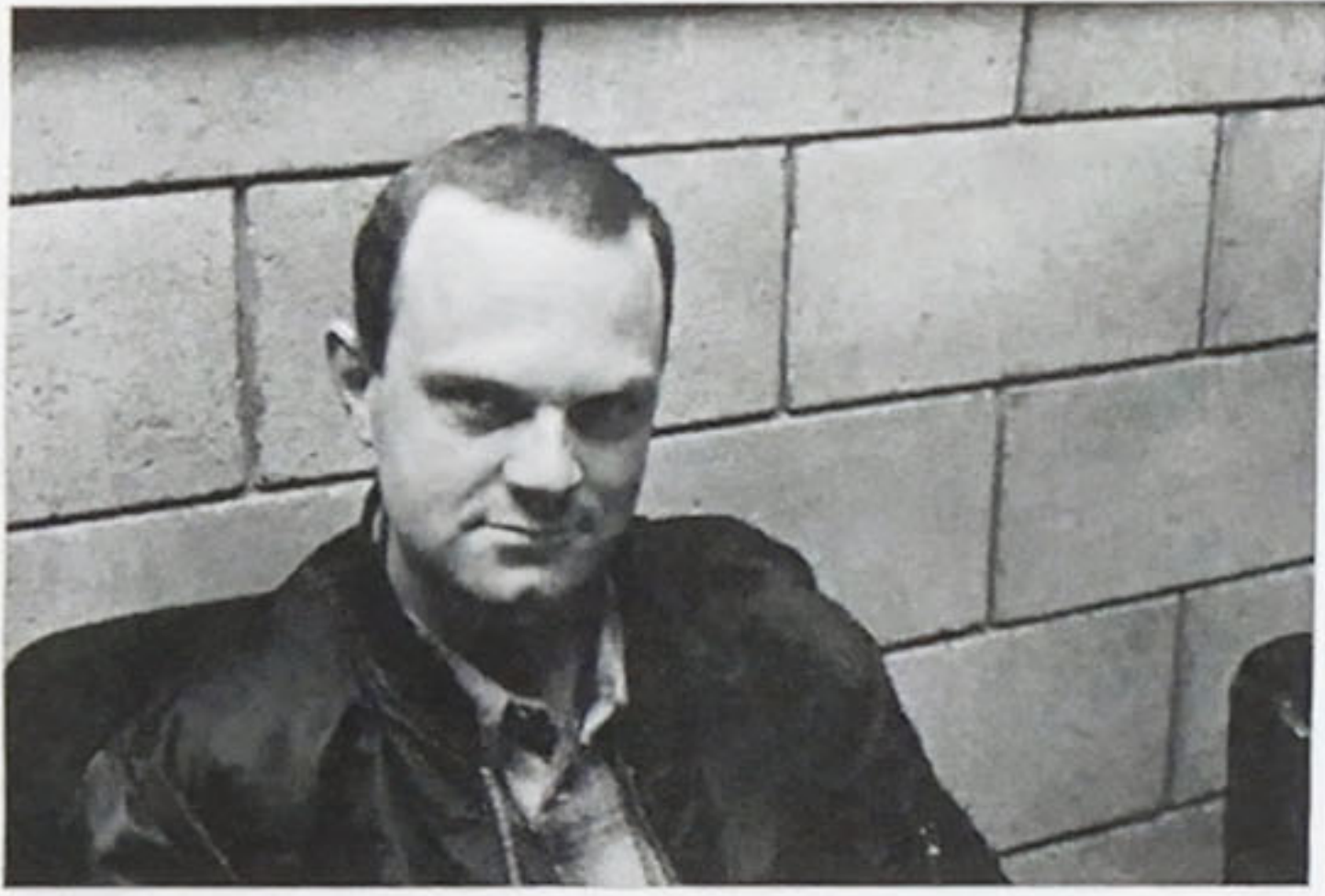
I have the most trouble with *Throw Window Sites*, *Islamic*, *Triad Tesseraic*, and *Storm Bugs*. The first three are in a mode I have little affinity with, a mode whose theory succeeds better than its practice. They are "abnormal" films, if I may so put it, as if the film-makers are pathological obsessives looking, looking, looking for something in (or simply looking at) shape, color, movement. *Storm Bugs* is different, but just as abnormal. Steven Ball is someone with as strong a personal style as Chris Windmill, and it's a style that's very perverse. A Greenaway influence? *Days in Ubud* and *Spiral U.S.A.* are less extreme films, due to them having "subject matter". I like *Museum* and *Midsummer* the best: the former occasionally discovers genuine miracles in its "looking", whilst the latter has at its service a film-maker with an astonishingly gentle touch. (Formal/stylistic choices are always crucial. I myself would have proceeded thus: a less-roving camera in *Throw Window Sites*; more close-ups in *Days in Ubud*; longer shots in *Spiral U.S.A.*; a quieter soundtrack for *Museum*; a tripod and quiet sound for *Midsummer*.)

It is particularly some of the formal decisions that disquiet me in some of these films. Little structure, little development, variation, etc. This affected other films too, like Remo Camerota's *Through the Looking Glass*. Powerful, effective, but, at 5 minutes it is 3 minutes too long. Too much of a good thing. A clit-hit. The film-maker defeats his own purpose.

Some films played with structure in an interesting way, being neither linearly structured nor "free-form". Heinz Boeck's *Big Table* is a study of displacement, a theme perfectly suited to its "subverted structure" method. Nicholas Hansen's *Vena Cava* also employs a similar structural pattern, but it seems to be inappropriate, creating missed opportunities: the characters are poorly integrated into the interesting central metaphor.

Finally, a quick word on three very individual films: Michael Kelleher's *Getting in and out of a Car: The First 2 Decades* left me quite bewildered. It was like an AFTRS film made on Super-8 (the "memory" feel; the extreme close-ups that seem to be full of significance; the "cleverness" of using a linking device). I wanted to like this film, but I felt empty at the end. Another film anticipated by me, Mark La Rosa's *Untitled*, proved more fruitful. As already mentioned, I find the "ideological critique" mode very limited and dry, but in this case the film-maker is so genuinely infused with his message that one has to make concessions. Like *Arnold West*, this is hybrid, original film-making. To witness a film-maker exploring and developing his ideas is a most exhilarating thing. Finally, Gerard Arthur King's *Rocky Raccoon* was a total delight. An inspired marriage of sight and sound. Congratulations to the selection committee for including it in the festival. And to the festival director for again making it all happen.





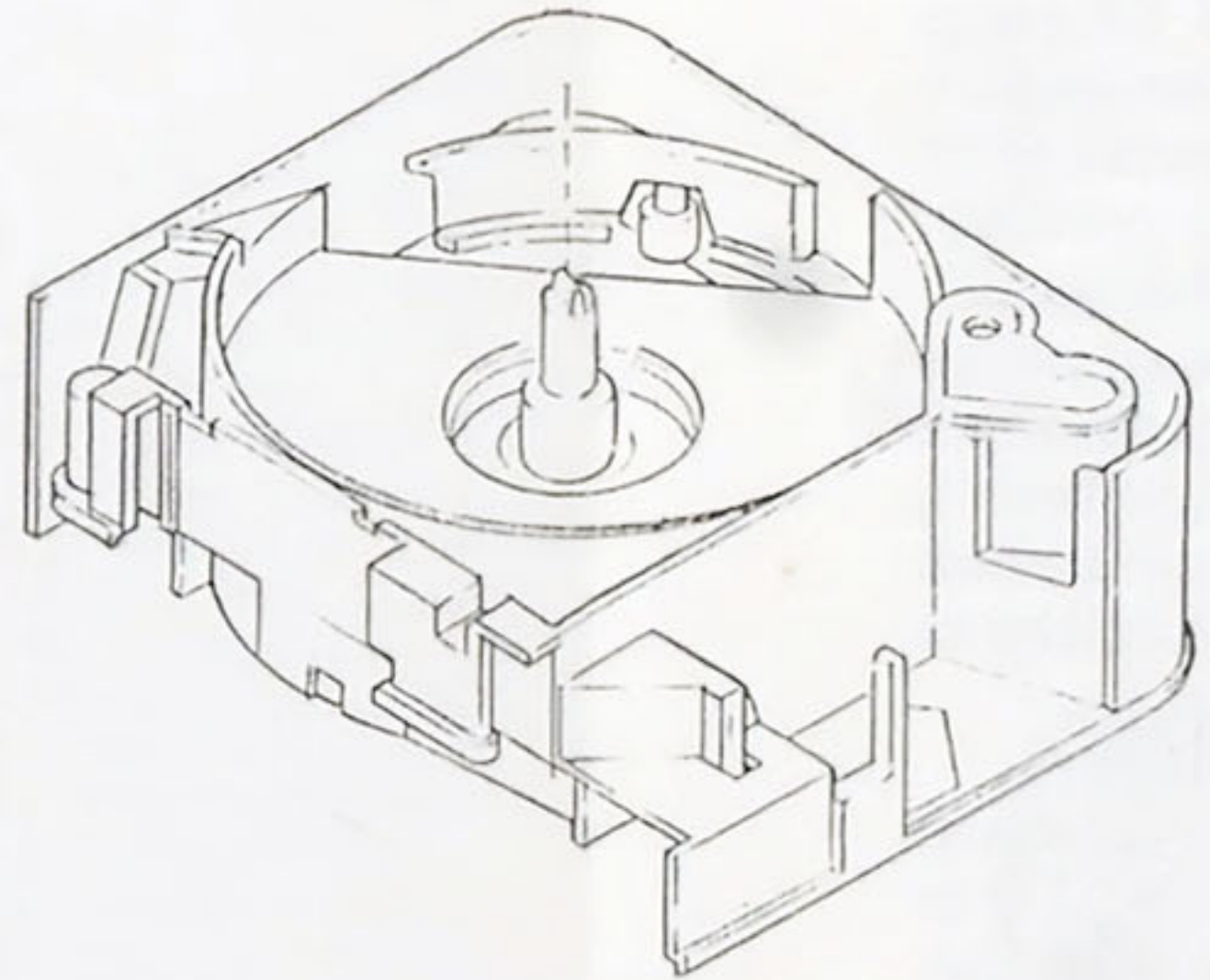
Richard Tuohy

7th MELBOURNE •SUPER 8• FILM FESTIVAL

photographs by Moira Joseph



Sarah Johnson, Steven Ball,
Richard Tuohy & Matthew Rees



Marie Craven, Jennifer Ross
& Chris Windmill



Pete Spence & Norma Pearse



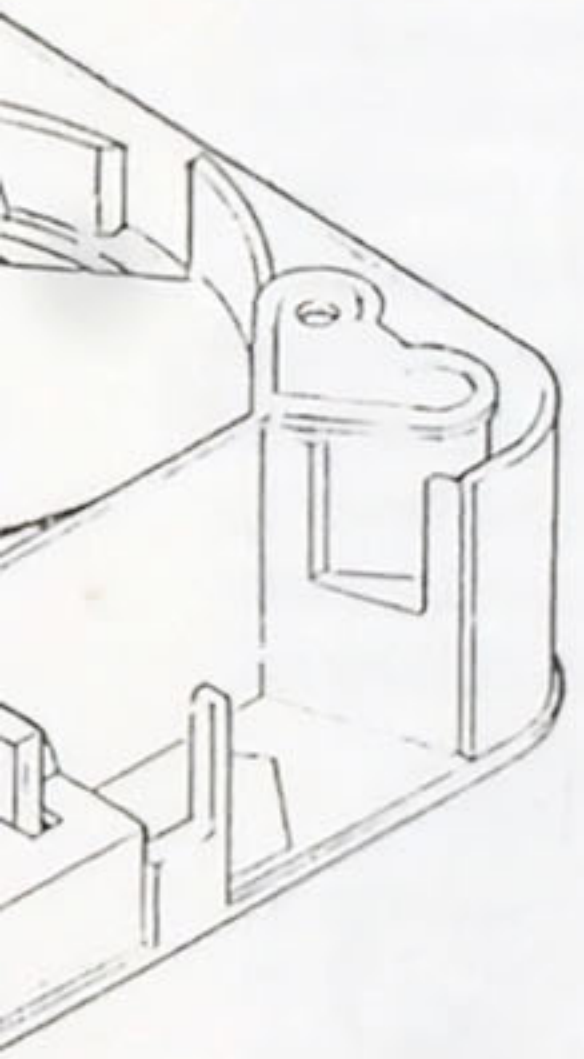
Gary O'Keefe & Pete Spence



Gianna Rosica & Matthew Rees

OURNE R 80 STIVAL

Moira Joseph



Ooni Peh



Bill Mousoulis, Damien Grant
& Peter Schuller



Ian McIntosh & Pardner



Jennifer Pignataro



Mark La Rosa & Corinne Cantrill



Nick Ostrovskis & Bill Mousoulis

A QUESTION OF CONTEXT

Steven Ball

I have to question whether festivals are necessarily the best way to view films, short films in particular. Conventions and economics dictate programme lengths, ticket prices and value for money (etc). The pressure to present a 'showcase' event can effectively conspire against the optimum exhibition of individual (and individual's) films. On the other hand the potential for establishing dialogue between films and filmmaking practice with the positioning of films in relation to each other can sometimes present a challenge to the programmers and the audience. On occasions we are surprised with thematic, aesthetic, formal and dynamic discord or harmony working for or against the individual films.

I don't intend to analyse the 7th Melbourne Super 8 Film Festival in these terms (at least not directly) at this stage, or to attempt to determine the overall 'success' of its programming strategy. To generalise, most conventional programming, criticism and discussion about film has, at some point, a consideration of genre either as a central or peripheral issue. Often, and depending upon the particular agenda or prejudice invested in by an individual or group these genre definitions can become the basis of an understanding of the influences or backgrounds to one or a body of film. At worst it can degenerate into self-fulfilling simplistic dualistic opposition (such as pro-narrative/anti-experimental or vice versa). This is not Paris in the '50s or New York in the '60s or London in the '70s or Hollywood in the '80s. We are not Godard or Brakhage or Gidal or Spielberg. This is Melbourne in the '90s and we are Spence and Schuller, Poppins, Pearse, Peh and Pignataro and so on. Of course each of us is several, and this makes quite a crowd.

In Australia we exist and work in a post-colonial culture, a culture typified by being a patchwork or collage of many different languages existing out of their original contexts. As such we are in the position of having to create a context and in film culture I feel that this means not following the old (colonial/imperialistic/hegemonic) conventional dictates of, for example, generic concerns, but embracing a more migratory, nomadic approach.

It is almost a cliché to say that Super 8 filmmaking often produces 'hybrid' films. This is quite evident in a number of the films in the festival as well as those shown throughout the year at the Open Screenings. An overview of the films produced within the group would reveal, not a unified and mutually shared film language, but a collage, a patchwork of differing concerns, styles and approaches. I think, I hope, that the festival programmes reflected this.

Are these festival films seen out of their context? Is the "real" context for these films within the body of the filmmakers work? Are we, consciously or not, contriving to create a cultural phenomenon called Melbourne Super 8 Filmmaking that can be seen as an entity in the world? Stop me if you've heard this one before. I suppose we are all doing this to a degree. A two way process.

The inclusion in the festival of films from overseas provides another, somewhat tangential, context. On an obvious level they provide a glimpse of what is happening in another part of the world, in a similar (gauge specific-wise) practice. The films from Rutgers Film Co-ops US Super 8 Film and Video Festival were examples of another version of the Super 8 film culture, Atsushi Sakurais films gave us an insight into his filmmaking practice. Most of these individual works were fairly self-contained: films holding up as complete entities out of their original context. There are films which don't do this so successfully. Films that, without a knowledge of the conditions of their production drift a little. Anchorless. I am thinking particularly of Anne Robertsons film *Going to Work*.

By chance I came upon a chapter on Robertson in Scott MacDonalds book *A Critical Cinema 2* in which MacDonald interviews a number of American independent filmmakers. All of Robertsons work is part of an on-going diary project (in 1988 the total work was over forty hours long). Robertson occasionally presents her films as the basis of a performance and includes audio tape and live commentary. MacDonald outlines the relationship between Robertsons life and work:

"For Robertson, whose manic-depressiveness has resulted in frequent hospitalizations, making and showing the diary has become a central means for maintaining psychic balance, her primary activity whenever she is free of the mental hospital and free enough of drug therapy to be able to produce imagery...her precise meditations on her physical environment make her Diary intermittently one of the most visually impressive Super 8 films I've seen. And the way in which she enacts contemporary compulsions about the correct appearance of the body (her weighing and measuring herself, nude, is a motif) and about the importance of meeting "the right guy" provide a poignant instance of the contemporary gender patterns so problematic for many women."

In the interview that follows Robertson says:

" I have to work part-time in order to make my mother think I'm sane. I can't talk to the people I work with. The last few jobs I've had have been extremely paranoid-building. I have hassles as soon as I emerge from a depression and try to pick up the real world again. A lot of people are crazy out there in the nine-to-five world, but they lay it on

J. CRAIG SHEARMAN

me and say *I'm* the crazy one." The interview was conducted in 1990. For *Going to Work*, made in 1981, Robertson provided the following programme notes:

"This is the record of a cold winter morning, the daily commute to work near the Bunker Hill Monument in Charlestown, Massachusetts: motion study, beauty found during the trudge, winter artifacts natural and man-made."

In the context of the festival programme (sandwiched between *Journey* and *O Elusive Sparrow*) it is a simple and affecting filmic portrait of a fragment of a day, with a rare lightness of touch. With the benefit of understanding its original context the film takes on an altogether different meaning.

I have to question whether festivals are necessarily the best way to view films. Whether films like Anne Robertsons, when removed from their original context, don't suffer just a little too much. How else can we programme films without imposing too much of our own little hegemony?



Robertson self-portrait, December 1991.
Top to bottom: "Depressive," "Normal,"
"Manic."



Filled with colorized, solarized, and reversed-polarity images, *Soma Sema* looks like a demo piece for the popular Video Toaster system. But the experimental film by Bradley Eros and Jeanne Liotta of Brooklyn, New York, is no high-tech marvel featuring the latest video gizmos. It was shot on a budget of a few hundred dollars and in a film format all but forgotten by most independents today—super 8. "That was the amazing thing," Eros says. "People would say, 'That was super 8?'"

The small size of super 8 equipment and the physical and visual properties of film over videotape are also important factors in choosing the medium, the filmmaking team say. "There's an intimacy that's a historical part of super 8 that's as intimate as one's home, one's bedroom, one's lovers, and one's closest friends," Eros says, noting that he and Liotta shot each other, without a crew, for the nude scenes in *Soma Sema*.

"For us, it has a draw in that it's something an individual can handle," he adds. "That's what makes it a material in a way that video is not a material," Liotta says. "It's not something tangible like film is."

The 13-minute *Soma Sema* begins with a mummy in a field—Liotta—with only its hands free to beckon the viewer nearer. Scenes of a naked woman, a burning doorway, and a knife cutting away at the mummy's shroud follow, along with scenes of hieroglyphics and a burning skull. While the experimental work has no discernible plot, Eros says it shows "a way of thinking about the body as a divine vessel."

The film includes a variety of visual effects most often associated with high-tech video gear or complicated optical printing. Instead, Eros and Liotta did the effects at home, some by transferring the original super 8 footage to video using a home-video camera with a simple negative-positive switch. The signal was then fed to a monitor, where ordinary hue and tint controls were used to alter the image while the screen was rephotographed with a super 8 camera.

Plode

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seizure, marks prime dimming
stopped at accent, swivel to ask tack,
descends slippage attraction, mute reek,
an astir wading gradient leach, finger
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sling soaking up sun cue, tag maze.

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destination scatters most lobs sourced
at louder grin, gain lure, ask fade,
a touch as hunch from certainty greets
approach, faction litany scours
short memory, simply evented,
mute sleeve as clue token on make.

fontal lobe, surface with a simile, apt
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grids from ear to ear, split rentals,
swipes iron rubs checking earlier
taper, data swanks, stretches lean,
instant bias motors brief suggestion
curve, torn cluster, abridged hyphen.

dogma flak, stack wilt, slick, what's
astir frequency in forest cuisine,
shrill spark tacks decorationwards
on used space, clutch, found model drift
elevates lead shout, particle vision,
goes logo, whisked sunset dips through
clutter haze, gesture abrasions.

zone instants captive, plateau in awkward
silt mobility, short tentative splash,
tangle purge, conglomerate, found at
destination proxy, stops steep against
echo shard, laundered, due sud, height
placard stirs short wind to chafe
overabundance, turn wedged in ascent.

by Pete Spence

Announcing the production of

OPEN CITY

a film by Bill Mousoulis

Open City is a feature-length narrative drama, to be made on Super-8.
Shooting will take place in May, pre-production this month (April).

I will be organizing cast and crew members over the next couple of
weeks, but if anyone is particularly keen to be involved in this project
(as either cast or crew), they should contact me. There is no pay
involved, of course, it being an extremely-low-budget film, but any
expenses will be met.

Also, if anyone has any out-of-date (or new) K40 Sound cartridges,
I will pay \$15 each for them.

Bill Mousoulis, 429 9847.

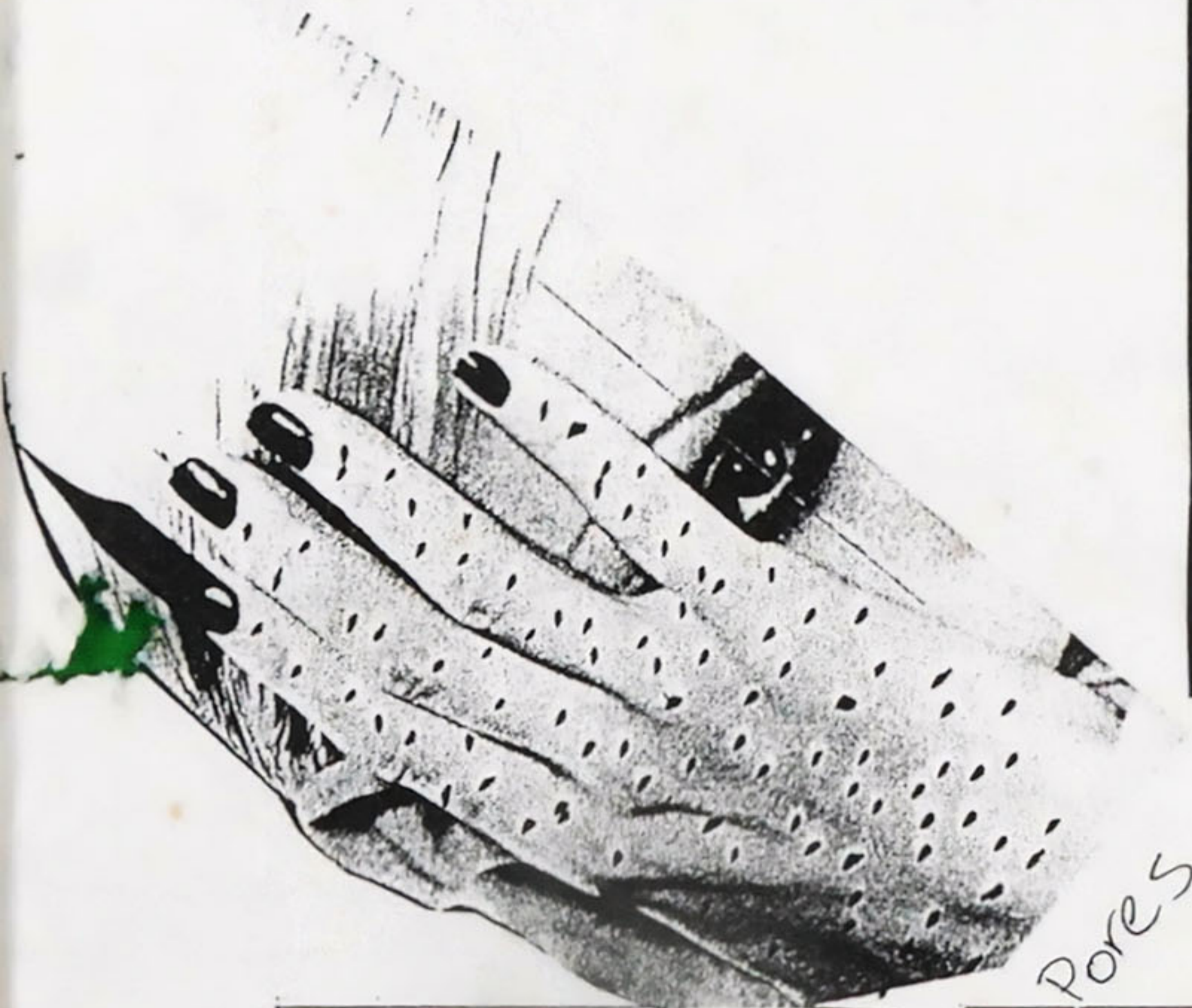
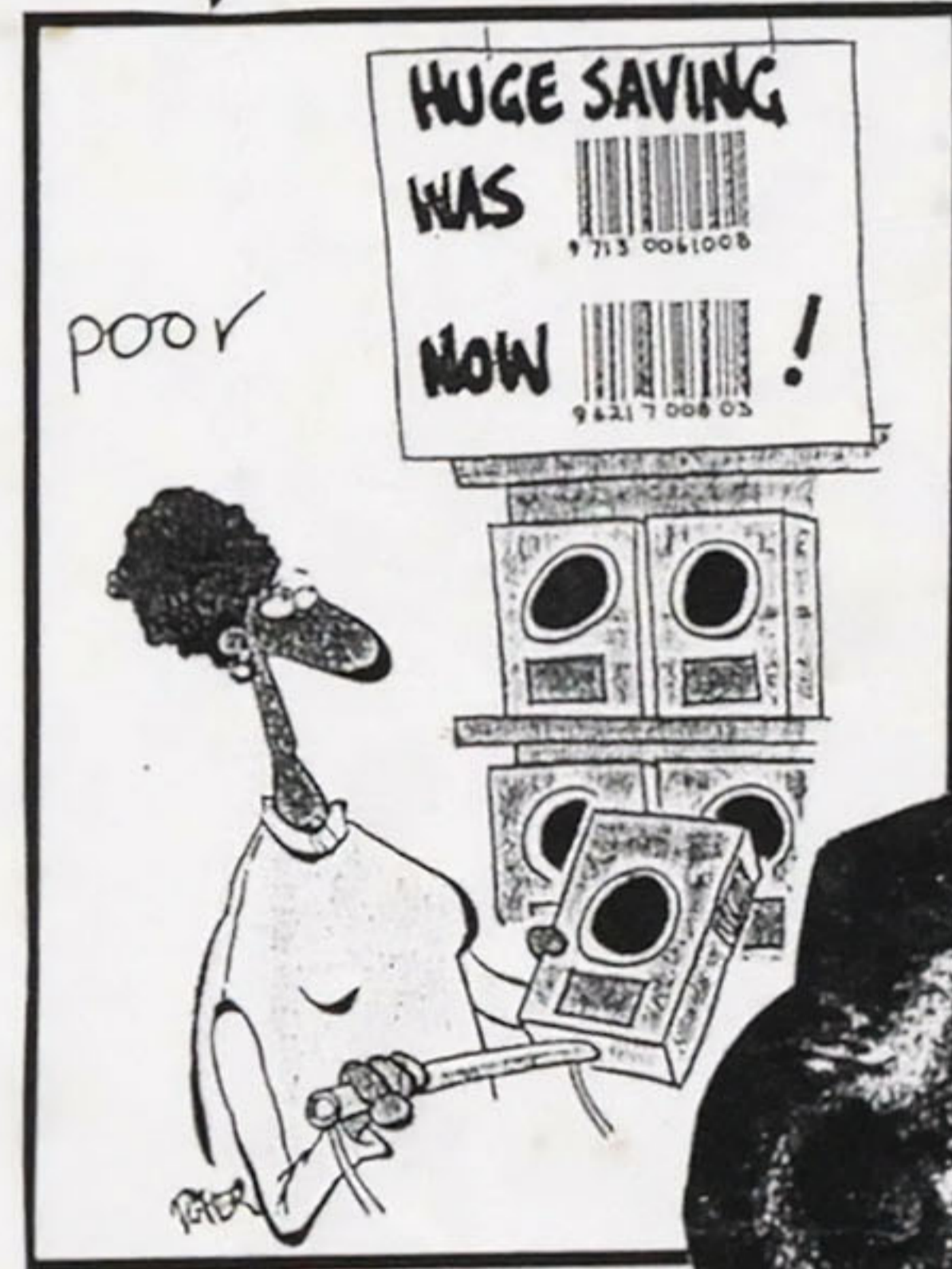
ADVANCE OPEN SCREENING NOTICE

The 13th July Open Screening will be thematic. All members are invited to make a film along the lines of the following thematic brief:

P + ORS

(that's pause, pores, paws, pours or whatever other phonetic variations you can come up with)

The films should be no longer than 3 minutes and run at 18fps. (silent, sound or cassette sound acceptable) Each participant will be rewarded with a roll of silent Kodachrome for their efforts and the films will be put together as a group package.



SUPER 8 EQUIPMENT HIRE

Equipment	Per Day	Per Week (7 days)
Sankyo Sound Camera	\$ 5	\$ 30
Silent Cameras Various	\$ 2	\$ 10
Editor Viewers	\$ 1	\$ 5
Wurker Splicers	\$ 1	\$ 5
Miller Tripod Junior	\$ 2	\$ 10
Elmo St-180 Projector	\$ 5	\$ 30



From *Morena* by Marie Craven



Editorial & Layout By: Steven Ball

Contact Number: 03 417 3402

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

If undeliverable return to:

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